

FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR.

FOUR years ago the Sydney Branch of the Australian English Association decided to issue a periodical Bulletin which should contain articles and notes of interest to members and others, particularly discussions of current literary topics and of general changes in the language. This Bulletin, having reached its tenth number in April of the present year, now gives place to a magazine which represents not merely an expansion from four pages to forty, but also essentially a new publication, a collection of original literary work both creative and critical, with a place reserved at the end for account of the Association's activities.

Southerly is not simply the official organ of the Association. It is a literary magazine, produced by and issued primarily to members, but designed to interest all who read, all who attempt to write, without being merely "popular" and indiscriminately hospitable. A certain standard of work has been aimed at, and will be preserved throughout the subsequent issues. Since, of necessity, contributions are not paid for, contributors are free to write simply because they have subjects in which they are interested, in which they hope to interest others. At the same time no propaganda of any sort will be admitted, nor will politics, unless they are to form the basis of satire or story which may have more than momentary value. *Southerly* is to serve the causes of literary art, of scholarship (in its broader manifestations), of literary criticism, and, through these as well as by means of direct report and comment, of the Australian English Association.

The objects for which that Association exists are set forth inside the cover of this issue, and will be repeated in those to follow. It is not an academic body, concerned solely with the teaching of English. It exists primarily to maintain the language in Australia and encourage its right use, and therefore is the servant and assistant of all who speak the language and read or contribute to the literature. It is producing this magazine as a venture, in the hope of general support that will enable publication to continue. The members of the Association feel that much can be done for Australian literature by

such means, since the contributors are all Australian or are resident in Australia; they feel also that, by supporting *Southerly*, even if its first number disappoints expectations, Australians will be stimulating the development of their literature and infusing more self-confidence into writers who have too little outlet for their undeniable ability.

No literary journal, no literary review, of any scope, standing, and influence, at present exists in Australia. This is not to depreciate the valiant nationalism of such organs as the *Sydney Bulletin*, or the literary sections of monthlies and quarterlies that, in spite of an abstinence from mere entertainment, continue their lives and do valuable work. But, generally speaking, it remains true that good writers cannot get good literary work published, except perhaps in book form, that conscientious readers cannot readily get careful opinions on new books which must otherwise be taken on trust, and that, altogether, Australian literary interest is suffering severely from a lack of means to display it.

In his experience, both as a teacher and as a critic, the Editor has been continually impressed by the amount of literary talent that in our land and time fests unused. To give one example (which is not intended to suggest any monopoly of talent): many of the Honours graduates in English at Sydney University would turn naturally to letters if any opportunity offered itself; instead, they enter upon other occupations, and, for lack of regular exercise, the fine edge of their literary sensibility becomes blunted and they use their powers of expression mainly for utilitarian ends. Geniuses one can hope to meet with only rarely, of course; but what appears to be merely talent may be really genius in embryo or disguise. The Editor ventures to claim that the present issue of *Southerly*, containing work by noted Australian writers, by beginners, by general practitioners—by almost every class of writer, in fact—indicates the possibilities of development, if it may not show actual achievement. Of the merits of the collection others may speak: it is necessary to say only that not a single item of it would have been printed if the editorial committee had not been satisfied that it was worth offering to a public which it believes to be ready to appreciate merit and ignore ineptitude.