Percy Fritz Rowland

Anne McKay

Percy Fritz Rowland

PERCY FRITZ ROWLAND (1870–1945), headmaster of Townsville Grammar School from 1905 to 1938, was by any measure a remarkable man. Earning his way by scholarships and bursaries, rare in his day, he took Final Honours in Classics (*Literae Humaniores*) at Oxford in 1893. Undecided whether to enter journalism or education, he preferred the former but fell into the latter. After pursuing his calling as a schoolmaster in Ireland, England, New Zealand, and New South Wales—where he wrote one of the earliest books on the federation of the Australian colonies—he came to Queensland as Second Master at the Rockhampton Grammar School.

Rowland took up the herculean task of building up the Townsville Grammar School after the devastation of Cyclone Leonta. With his wife he struggled through years of challenge and hardship, never losing his faith in the future of North Queensland and making time to write scintillating articles and humorous sketches. That he succeeded is manifest in the men and women who went ahead to build useful and in some cases notable careers on the foundation he laid. The traditions which he established are still vital in the school which he built. This brief life, written by Anne McKay in partial fulfilment of the B.A. (Hons) degree requirements in 1972, is a slight tribute to a man who bravely carried the torch of culture in North Queensland for a generation.

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Colin Roderick

P. F. Rowland, Sir Leslie Wilson (Governor of Queensland), and Chester Parker (Rhodes Scholar). Parker is receiving his Junior Certificate, 1932.
Photo by George Henry

Percy Fritz Rowland

A Brief Biography

by

ANNE McKAY

James Cook University of North Queensland

FOUNDATION FOR AUSTRALIAN LITERARY STUDIES
JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY OF NORTH QUEENSLAND

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Of the many old boys of the Townsville Grammar School who have shown interest in this work, I am particularly indebted to Mr W. J. Gillman, who provided not only a great deal of information about Rowland at the Townsville Grammar School but also lent copies of Rowland's writings and of his letters. A facsimile of one letter appears in this volume. My thanks go also to Mr John Ashe and to Mr T. B. Whight, former pupil and headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School, and to Dr V. Henry, who kindly lent me his copy of Rowland's book, *The New Nation*. Mr L. S. Daniels, present headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School, was kind enough to lend volumes of the *Townsville Grammar School Magazine* from 1905 to 1941, Rowland's book *At Call-Over*, and the photograph of Rowland which has been reproduced here. R. W. Moore's *History of the Townsville Grammar School* was a valuable source of reference.

I wish also to thank Dr V. B. Henry for the frontispiece.

Finally I wish to record my thanks to Professor Colin Roderick, Head of the Department of English at James Cook University, for his interest in and supervision of this work.

Preface

THE name of Percy Fritz Rowland is well known to many North Queenslanders. Former pupils of the Townsville Grammar School will remember him as the jovial English headmaster who, with his new wife, sailed into the Townsville harbour in the *Arawatta* in January 1905, to take charge of that school. He remained there until December 1938. In those 34 years of devoted service to the school he made a name for himself as a headmaster and teacher of the highest order and as a man of great humour, understanding, and outstanding ability.

Other Northerners will remember Rowland as the author of the entertaining "Essays in Brief" written by "P.F.R.", which were published in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* and in *The North Queensland Register* during the 1930's. Still others may remember him as the man who did so much to improve the standard of education in North Queensland, and who endeavoured to dispel the rumours in those early days that the North was no fit place for the white man.

This brief biography, originally written as a discourse in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts with Honours in the Department of English in the James Cook University of North Queensland, offers a sketch of the extent of this man's educational and literary accomplishments so that the present generation might realize the great debt that North Queensland owes to him.

ANNE MCKAY

Mill House,
Hartest,
Bury St. Edmunds.

Dec 2. '39

Dear Gilly,

Our letters seem to have a knack of crossing. Your air-mail letter of Nov 15 came this morning. You tell me of your schooling work in Cairo. I don't remember the Court House Hotel. I always used to stay at the Strand, with occasional Cairo beers at Heides Hotel or the Post Office. I have always liked Cairo, except in really hot weather. I like the buildings: I like the people.

Two or three years ago I noticed my inscription on their War Memorial, misprinted, or 2 lines wrongly-divided, & wrote to the "Cairo Post" drawing attention to the fact. Nothing, of course, was done. I sup-

hope that Melrose was the contractor, or used, or misused, my lines without permission. I hope the "dry" canteen has been duly abolished. This soldiering business is bad enough anyhow, except to those that like it, & to rob one of one's beer is adding insult to injury.

This Russia-Finn business is sickening, & should cure anyone of Bolshevik tendencies. Surprised to hear of Neil Russell & Keith MacLeod.

I suppose they exempted accountants to be sure the income-tax returns are properly made out. Then they have so far exempted schoolmasters. O Gilly, it is a busy-body war. I should think the Almighty quite justified in resigning, or in destroying humanity as he is said to have done in Noah's time. Perhaps there are more sensible stars elsewhere!

Ever yours
P.J.R.

Percy Fritz Rowland

A Brief Biography

Introduction

THIS book is essentially the biography of a man who made teaching his career, but felt that journalism was his true vocation. In his lifetime Percy Rowland was well known both as a teacher and as a writer, but since his work always came first with him, the full potential of his literary ability was, unfortunately, never really exploited. Those who did know Percy Rowland, who were taught by him or who read his works, probably do not know the story of his life. I have endeavoured to present as detailed an account of his life as information permits, relying for that information chiefly on Rowland's own remarks in several autobiographical essays and articles, and on the reminiscences of people who knew the man himself. Throughout I have attempted to stress, where relevant, how different circumstances during his life influenced the development of his natural literary talent.

Rowland was born in London in 1870. The first chapter is concerned with his early life in England. Unfortunately, only a very limited amount of information came to light about Rowland as a schoolboy and as a young man. He makes some remarks about his very early years in a newspaper article entitled "Books I've Liked Best", and frequently alludes to places at which he spent childhood holidays, but for the most part I have had to be guided by facts obtained from the schools Rowland attended in London. He received his primary education at University College School and his secondary education at St Paul's School. His years at Oxford are clearer to us, for he wrote quite extensively about the university. We know his academic qualifications and that he won several important prizes at the university for literary essays, but of Rowland's actual personality as a student there has not been much to recount. Regrettably, a couple of diaries that Rowland kept in his student days were burnt relatively recently. These would have been of great interest and of help in ascertaining the type of man Rowland was at

Oxford. For the purpose of this thesis, the most important effect of his university career was that it helped Rowland to realize what a precious gift he had: the gift of literary expression.

Chapter One deals also with Rowland's teaching career up to 1905—to the time when he came to Townsville Grammar School. He taught in several countries: England, Ireland, New Zealand, and Australia; thus he gained a wide experience of many systems of education. His works include informative descriptions of the schools at which he taught and many papers in which he criticizes the education systems which he observed closely. In 1901, when Rowland wrote *The New Nation*, he had firm views on the subject of education in Australia, but it was not until he became the headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School that he earned the reputation of being a severe critic of the Education Department.

Chapter Two is devoted entirely to Rowland's term at the Grammar School in Townsville, for the 34 years he spent there were probably the most significant years of his life. His courage and endurance are strongly stressed here, because those 34 years were not easy ones. There were countless difficulties involved in the running of a boarding school, and the fact that the North was virtually neglected in many ways by the Queensland Education Department made the task harder. Rowland said:

> Secondary education in North Queensland needs all the help it can be given. In such countries as this of ours the race for wealth necessarily leads to the under-valuing of things of the mind; in such countries again and again is brought home all too late to the individual experience the folly of gaining the world and losing the soul.[1]

Rowland was one man who did give education all the help that he could. In Chapter Four I have shown, with illustrations from Rowland's criticisms, how he attempted to improve the standard of education in the North.

Chapter Three concerns Rowland's retirement. The material for this has been mainly extracted from an article called "A Year in England", written by Rowland after a visit to his homeland. He continued to write for the newspapers when

he went to live in Brisbane in 1940, and thereafter until his death in New South Wales in 1945. So active a man would have found retirement unbearable had he not had his writing to occupy his mind.

This is primarily an account of the life of Percy Rowland, but it would not be complete without an account of his literary work as well. Rowland had only one book published, *The New Nation*, but he wrote innumerable articles and essays which appeared in many newspapers and journals both in England and in Australia. Chapter Four deals with these, and in particular with Rowland's ideas on education and on the neglect of the North.

The Appendices contain examples of Rowland's work. These briefly illustrate Rowland's diversity and range of ability.

Men who were taught by Percy Rowland years ago still clearly remember the "Boss's" colourful personality, and many testify that this man would have been one of the greatest shaping influences on their lives.

Chapter 1
Early Years

PERCY FRITZ ROWLAND was a London boy. From his earliest years as a scholar at University College School, until he went to Oxford, he seems to have been away from London infrequently. His boyhood holidays he spent in such places as Suffolk and the Channel Islands, and as a young man he rode his bicycle about the country lanes of England. It is safe to say that when he began his teaching career he could hardly have been described as a worldly, much-travelled University graduate.

Born in England on 14th April 1870, he was the eldest son of F. A. A. Rowland, an Islington solicitor. He belonged to quite a large family, but this was not unusual in those days in England. There were three boys, Percy, who was the cleverest child of the family, Stanley and Alton, and four girls, Marian, Henrietta, Ethel and Teressa. Of the seven, only Percy and Alton married and, as Alton and his wife died childless in Canada, Percy was the only son to carry on the name of Rowland.[1]

Very little is known about his early childhood or, indeed, about that of any of the children, for to Percy's own children they were simply distant English relatives whom one never saw.

Percy's parents also remain vague characters in the background. His father had gone to Germany at some stage in his life, perhaps to study, and there had met the German girl, Catherine, whom he later married. Of this girl who was Percy's mother we know practically nothing. One of her grandchildren recalls that she used to bake all the family bread, and this is almost the only information we have.[2] She must have died later than 1940, for Percy returned to England in 1939 to visit her, and there he celebrated his seventieth birthday with her in April 1940.

From an early age Percy learnt to accept responsibility, for his father was apparently careless in money matters—or perhaps, as a solicitor in those days, his income was not sufficient to maintain a family of nine. In any case, the boy Percy, as the eldest child, often had to help keep the family.

He went to University College School at the age of nine, and the school register of 1891 gives his address as 7 South Parade, Bedford Park, London. This school was originally founded in the grounds of University College in Gower Street, London, and was in 1907 moved to Hampstead.[3] From here, in 1883, he went to the famous St Paul's School, where he was admitted as a scholar on Dean Colet's Foundation.

John Colet had become dean of St Paul's Cathedral in 1504. In 1505, when his father died, he inherited a considerable fortune, much of which went towards the establishment of St Paul's School. St Paul's opened in 1510 with William Lily as headmaster. Colet took a great interest in the school: he drew up the "rules and regulations" and supervised the instruction of the boys in the "Christian faith and good literature".[4]

At St Paul's Percy reached the highest classical form and was awarded two very important school prizes for literary work: the Milton Prize in 1889, his last year at school, and the Smee Prize. In addition, he was *proxime* for both the School Essay Prize and the English Literature Prize.[5] His literary talent was already apparent.

In the late nineteenth century it was much more difficult than it is today for a boy to obtain the benefits of a university education. Scholarships were hard to come by; but Percy was a bright scholar, and in 1888, while at St Paul's, he won a Macbride Scholarship to the University of Oxford. This scholarship was worth £50 a year and was probably awarded on the results of an Entrance Examination. In 1889, at Hertford College, Oxford, he obtained an open classical scholarship. It was valued at £100 a year. Presumably when he came to Hertford they thought he was so promising that they decided to give him the more valuable award as well.[6]

Without the financial help these scholarships provided, it is doubtful that Percy would have been able to further his education. He matriculated on 14th October 1889 and went into residence at Hertford College, where he remained until he completed his degree in the summer of 1893.

His university career was a successful one. He took Second Class in Classical Honour Moderations in 1891, and Second Class in the Final Honour School of Literae Humaniores in 1893, having studied in particular the languages and histories of Ancient Greece and Rome. Rowland received his Bachelor of Arts degree on 1st February 1894, and he was to take his Master of Arts degree on 17th June 1909, *in absentia*, after having been at the Townsville Grammar School for a little more than four years.[7] The requirements for these degrees in those days were much the same as they are now. "For the Bachelor of Arts, a man had to have resided for twelve terms; passed or been exempted from Responsions (Mr Rowland was exempted by virtue of the School Certificate which he held); passed the first Public Examination, which, in his case, was Classical Honour Moderations, together with an examination in Holy Scripture which he passed in 1892; and passed the second Public Examination which, in his case, was the Final Honour School of Literae Humaniores. The only requirement for the Master of Arts is and was that one should hold a Bachelor of Arts degree and that seven years should have elapsed since the matriculation".[8]

As a young student he was interested particularly in literature and philosophy. From all accounts he was not an athletic man, and the only mention of any sporting activity in which he participated while at the university is that he was keen on rowing and was cox of the Hertford College eight.[9] In his literary pursuits he excelled. He was involved in the organization of a College Shakespearean Society, of which he was the Chairman, and also in a University Ruskin Society, and he won several important prizes for literary work. In 1890 he was "honourably mentioned", so he says, for the Stanhope Historical Essay Prize. He was in fact *proxime accessit* for this prize, the subject of his essay being

"Daniel Defoe". During the Prep. hour each morning at the Drogheda Grammar School, where he later became a master, he kept himself occupied with an essay on "A Comparison, Criticism and Estimate of English Novelists from 1700 to 1850", which won the Chancellor's English Essay Prize at Oxford in 1894.[10] He says that when the judge, Professor Francis Turner Palgrave, editor of *A Golden Treasury of Songs and Lyrics*, awarded him the prize, he gently chided him on what was "indeed a sin"—inadequate treatment of Jane Austen.[11] He won yet another prize—the Cobden University Prize—this time competing from Australia in 1896. The topic dealt with in this essay was "How far has the progress of events modified the objections which have been made in past times to the practice of taking interest?" Candidates were probably allowed to choose their own subjects, which had to be connected with political economy, and the prize was open to all members of the university who had not exceeded 28 terms from matriculation. The Cobden Prize is no longer awarded, but the other two prizes that Rowland won are still competed for.[12] These prizes suggest that he was a young man of extraordinary literary ability.

At the university Rowland moved in literary circles. He knew William Ralph Inge, later known as "The Gloomy Dean" because of his pessimistic outlook. Inge, at the time, was a fellow of Hertford College, having been ordained a deacon in 1888. He became well known in English literature, particularly for his essays.[13]

When Rowland graduated from Oxford in 1893, it was time to decide on a career. He writes:

> When I left Oxford, Professor Lewis of the Cambridge University Appointments Committee strongly advised me, without athletic proficiency or a specially good degree, against teaching as a career. I tried in London and in Manchester for a journalistic job, but without success. So I gave my name to the usual scholastic agents, and was snowed upon by notices of vacancies all over the country. My father's friend, Professor York Powell, warned me against Preparatory schools. "Lead to nothing," he said. The best of other positions offering was at the Grammar School, Drogheda. . . .[14]

This school was in Ireland, on the eastern coast, and here Rowland gained his first experience as a teacher of literature and history. He gives an interesting account of life at his first school:

> The salary was not colossal, £70 a year, board and residence. (My four years at Oxford must have cost £800—£500 of it defrayed by scholarships.) But I, a Londoner born and bred, was curious to see something of Ireland and accepted it.
>
> It was an interesting experience. The school was one of the Erasmus Smith foundations, a Protestant school of about a hundred boys, day boys and boarders, in a Catholic city. The hours were unusual. "Prep"—my share of duty—seven a.m. (no morning tea) till eight. First hour's school, eight till nine. Then came breakfast; cold mutton for the masters, bread and butter for the boys. School from ten till one. Lunch (fifteen minutes)—cold mutton for the masters, bread and butter for the boys. When school ceased at three, the masters in turn "brought" the boys to the playing field, where they played football. (Cricket was unpopular.) The headmaster, the Reverend F. S. Aldhouse, used sometimes to drop in to encourage our efforts, like Mr Bultitude's headmaster in *Vice Versa*. At five came the chief meal of the day; hot mutton for the masters and boys, and potatoes, boiled with their jackets on. Evening Preparation, seven till nine.
>
> On the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, some of the money had gone to the endowment of secondary education. Work at the school centred on a stringent external examination system, and pupils refused to listen willingly to any instruction that did not have obvious marks value.[15]

Rowland left the Drogheda Grammar School after he had won the University of Oxford Chancellor's Prize. This had improved his finances considerably. Then, in 1895, he obtained a mastership at the King's School in Warwick, "near the glorious castle". This was a better post than that at Drogheda. He taught, in addition to the ordinary school subjects, the special history class and some classical work, as he had done at Drogheda. Still an avid admirer of Shakespeare, he founded a Shakespearean Society at the school, and this was still in existence in 1907. Proof, perhaps, of his ability as a teacher is the fact that one of his pupils was elected to an Open Scholarship in History at Christ Church, Oxford.[16]

He was happy in the genial conditions of the school at Warwick, which, like many English schools, was run by a Board of Trustees and was partly financed by the Government. He might have stayed there indefinitely had he not been lured to distant parts by the offer of a private tutorship at twice the salary of £120 that he was receiving at the King's School. This new position was in Australia. As it was curiosity that drew him to Ireland, so it was curiosity again, this time about the other side of the world, that made him leave the security of Warwick and set off for the unknown.[17]

Mr C. B. Fairfax, one of the sons of Sir James Fairfax, of the family who owned the influential newspaper, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, had offered Rowland the position of preparing his boy for a public school. Rowland fulfilled his task well, for he informs us in a letter written in 1902 that the boy was then doing well at Winchester.[18]

He put his three years in Australia to good use. In Sydney he interested himself in organizing a movement similar to the University Settlement Movement founded by his uncle, Canon Barnett, in East End, London. This movement was connected with the University of Sydney, where he had been placed on the staff of University Extension lecturers. His connection with it brought him into contact with the various sections of the community, and he learnt the art of arranging public meetings. At the same time, he joined the Teachers' Association of New South Wales, which consisted of Professors at the University, and secondary and primary school teachers. Rowland read several educational papers before this group, and was elected a member of the Council. He was greatly interested in the public instruction of the Colony and read papers also before the Australian Association for the Advancement of Science. Here, too, he organized the Toynbee Guild—a society of University men interested in social questions. This involved the organization of lectures and debates by such prominent men in the Colony as the Attorney General of New South Wales, the Hon. B. R. Wise, and the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sydney. When Rowland wrote about this in 1902, the Society was still in

existence, amalgamated with the University Boys' Club under the new name of University and City League, and was "doing good work".[19]

In addition to taking an active part in the educational and social aspects of late nineteenth-century Sydney, he kept up his literary work. It was during this time that he wrote the essay which won the Cobden University Prize at Oxford in 1896.

His work as tutor to the Fairfax boy had to come to an end. After three years in Sydney, his attention was struck by the news item that a master at a New Zealand High School, who was also a lecturer at the local University College, had been arrested for forgery. He formed two conclusions from this: that it was possible to be both lecturer at the College and a teacher at the school, and that there was a vacancy. He wrote an application to the headmaster and obtained the appointment.[20]

Percy Rowland was not a man to sit back and wait for things to happen to him. When he saw an opportunity he took the initiative, if he were interested. And he was interested in the prospect of seeing a new country. Only a short time before, he had been offered the acting headmastership of Newington College, one of the four large Sydney schools, for a year; instead, he left for New Zealand in December 1898.[21]

The school he went to was the Boys' High School in Christchurch, a day school, the cleverer of whose pupils "found their way to the adjacent University College".[22] This adjacent college was Canterbury College, one of the few teaching institutions that comprised the University of New Zealand. It was here that Rowland lectured for two years on Political Economy and Constitutional History. He was almost 29. Of his experience in Christchurch Rowland said:

> One of my classes at the High School was a form of thirty boys with scholarships from the primary schools, and the experience thus acquired gave me an insight into some of the more salient merits and defects of the primary school system in New Zealand, which does not differ in essentials from that in England.[23]

He wrote:

> I found the work interesting, keeping me in touch, as it did, with the Colony's primary, secondary and university education systems; but I could not quite reconcile myself to passing the rest of my life in a rather small Colony, and so resigned my appointment and decided to return to England.[24]

He had also decided that educational opportunities were greater in England and so, after two years of busy life in New Zealand, he left in December 1900. It is interesting to note that the young man who had left Oxford only seven years before, in the hopes of becoming a journalist, and who had been strongly advised against teaching, now looked like making that very occupation his lifelong career. In those seven years he had taught in four different countries, and it seemed that the more experience he gained in teaching, the more he felt it was perhaps his true vocation. It is also interesting that Rowland at the age of thirty could not reconcile himself to the thought of passing the rest of his life in a small colony, yet he seemed quite content to spend over thirty years of his life at the tiny Grammar School in Townsville, a relatively small city in North Queensland, to which he came only five years after leaving New Zealand.

He did not return directly to England. Even the most determined person can change his mind, if he is interested enough in an alternative. Rowland tells us that "a rich Sydney acquaintance, who was going 'home' in something over a year, asked me to take over the tutoring of his two sons, and return to England with them. As this gave me an opportunity of watching Australian politics at a peculiarly interesting time (Federation was just being consummated), and also afforded leisure for a book on Australia which had long been in my mind, I was glad to avail myself of the offer. . . ."[25] The book he refers to was published by Smith, Elder and Co., London, in 1903. It was called *The New Nation—A Sketch of the Social, Political and Economic Conditions and Prospects of the Australian Commonwealth.* It had been, subject to satisfactory revision, accepted by one of the best London publishers, and detached chapters had already appeared as articles in such periodicals as

Macmillan's Magazine, *The Economic Review* and the *Nineteenth Century*.[26] The period that he spent in Sydney was thus very valuable. He had time and opportunity to collect material for his book, and by living in Sydney he was gaining first-hand experience of life in the colonies.

It was in June 1902 that Percy disembarked in England. Still intent on a career in the educational field, he intended, at the suggestion of influential friends in Sydney, to start a first grade Preparatory school for which there was a distinct opening. He waited for a time to see if any particularly attractive work was offering first, and eventually applied for the post of Director of Education for the County of Nottingham, having been informed of the vacancy by the Oxford University Appointments Committee.[27] Out of a hundred applicants he was placed among the first four and was interviewed at "Robin Hood's city". A local man was the successful candidate, but this did not discourage Rowland. His near approach to success encouraged him to take educational work in England with a view to qualifying himself better for a similar position.[28]

Much of his work was of a temporary nature. His first post was at Rossall, a large Lancashire public school, to which his old headmaster at Warwick had been promoted. He was there only for the Christmas term of 1902, in charge of one of the forms, as well as taking some English work with the Sixth Form. In January 1903 Rowland began teaching at Abingdon School, near Oxford. He had accepted this position on the understanding that he might again apply for a post of Director of Education if one arose. It was pleasant and congenial work there, and he was able to acquire some local knowledge and sympathy and gain some idea of the educational conditions and requirements of Berkshire.[29] It was a disappointment when he failed to obtain the post of Educational Secretary to the Berkshire County Council.

This was not the only disappointment he had to suffer. In an article he wrote many years later, in his retirement, Rowland said: "Disappointed that the book [*The New Nation*], in spite of eulogistic letters from James Bryce and

Sir John Gorst, and excellent reviews, did not obtain the success that I, of course, thought it deserved; and also missing the sunshine, as most of those do who try living in England again after living in Australia and New Zealand, I saw an advertisement in the *Times* of a vacant Second Mastership at the Rockhampton Grammar School. This promised rather more sun than I wanted. But still when the Cambridge don authorized to make the appointment offered it to me, I accepted, and came out second class in the good ship *Omrah*, sunk in the last war".[30]

Thus it was that Rowland returned to Australia, the country in which he was to spend the rest of his life—a period of 42 years, broken only by a brief visit to his homeland in 1939, the year he retired.

It was a pleasant voyage out in the *Omrah* and it gave Rowland the chance to visit friends in Melbourne and Sydney. At Sydney he changed to a small coastal vessel and experienced sea-sickness for the first and last time, just outside Keppel Bay.[31] His arrival at Rockhampton was chronicled in the school magazine: "Messrs Ryan and Cooper's places have been taken by Mr Percy Fritz Rowland, late scholar of Hertford College. . . ."[32] The Mr Ryan mentioned was T. J. Ryan, who was resigning to enter political life, and Rowland, who had been interested in politics since his Sydney days, was present at Ryan's first meeting in the Rockhampton School of Arts.[33] T. J. Ryan was to make his mark in Queensland politics.

The school was one of seven or eight in Queensland built by local subscription, subsidized by a Government grant, and controlled by a Committee, partly of Government nominees. Each school was subject to inspection by the Education Department. Only about twelve of the hundred pupils at the school were boarders.

Among Rowland's literary remains is the manuscript of a chapter entitled "Rockhampton and Townsville", which suggests that he may have intended writing a book setting down his impressions of schools at which he had taught.

This chapter gives an entertaining description of various aspects of life at the Rockhampton Grammar School:

The headmaster, John Wheatcroft, had been in charge for many years; a strong upstanding veteran, with a trick of managing boys in a friendly dictatorial way that became him well. At Cambridge he had distinguished himself in boxing as well as in mathematics. The story was that he came out from a mastership at Croydon as a young celibate headmaster, and that after a year, with the Trustees' full approval, he wrote to his English fiancée, and secured her passage to Brisbane, where the marriage was to take place. He met the boat, but was received with embarrassment by his intended bride, who introduced him to her husband; they had been married in the course of the voyage. Mr Wheatcroft returned to Rockhampton, and after a time married the headmistress of the adjacent Girls' Grammar School. There were four daughters, and in my time they divided between them the duties of matron, cook and housemaid with charming efficiency, finding time for deeds of prowess on the tennis court. Mrs Wheatcroft divided her time between the boys whom she mothered, and the goats against whom she waged an everlasting war in defence of her ferns on the verandah. The goats were everywhere, even on the coat of arms of the school.

Mr Wheatcroft was a man of routine. Every Friday he kept in after four the boys whose work had been unsatisfactory. One by one the tasks would be completed and the delinquents allowed to depart. By five all except four or five would probably be gone. These unfortunates the Head would solemnly order to "walk the plank", and as each passed in front of him on the long form, would give him a well-directed cut by way of goodbye. Then he would mount his old horse, and ride across to his friends the Archers at their station, Gracemere, some few miles away, leaving me acting headmaster until the next morning.

Every year as the long December midsummer holidays approached, his large Canadian canoe would be brought into the big schoolroom, and every day, after school, he would be busy repainting it and getting it in order for his annual cruise in the lonely upper waters of the Fitzroy; solitary, or with a boy for company.

Every night, after the evening meal, his work over, he would recline in his squatter's chair on the upstairs verandah, and read French novels or the wit and wisdom of Thomas Love Peacock whose philosophy of life he shared. The verandah commanded a fine view from the range, and the boss's lamp

was a beacon-light visible for miles around. And a beacon-light his teaching was to many hundred old boys throughout Central Queensland. A fine old English gentleman, he may not have kept up with the "march of mind" but he firmly and faithfully regulated his steps in accordance with the music that he heard.[34]

At the time masters were hard to get, and Rowland's predecessor T. J. Ryan was asked to stay on temporarily as a non-resident master. Ryan was a remarkable man, destined before many years to become Premier of Queensland. In leisure hours he read for the bar. Rowland regarded him as a born lawyer in temperament, with an abnormal talent for disregarding unessentials and getting at the gist of a thing. Though autocratic, he was genial and friendly.[35] Rowland writes:

> While I was at "Rocky", a discovery of scattered nuggets in the Dee River bed, less than 20 miles away, interested us all. "T.J." pegged out a claim and in the Easter holidays the Junior Master and I set out for the diggings. Except for one night we did not sleep on the field but at a bush inn a few miles from the scene of our action. We used to walk in every morning with our picks. Mr Ryan rode over one day from town to inspect our efforts. We had been successful only in getting "colours", and found no nuggets in our claim. A neighbour had better luck. One morning as we were walking in, we met him on horseback, carrying a small but heavy object in a bag. "I've struck it, mates," he cried, and was prevailed upon to show us his find, a small nugget worth three or four hundred pounds, which he was taking to a Rockhampton bank.
>
> One day there was a Warden's Court on the sides of the dry banks of the River Dee, a picturesque gathering of some hundreds of men of all nationalities from all parts of Australia—news of a find soon travels. . . . It was interesting to get this little glimpse of an Australian gold field in the making, even though the only gold I won was from an article on it in an English newspaper.[36]

Work at the Rockhampton Grammar School was mainly directed towards the passing of the Sydney University Examination. Rowland taught Fifth Form English, and some Latin and French and, in addition, had some work with the lowest form. In his chapter "Rockhampton and Townsville" he recalls many amusing incidents of the schoolroom.

About twelve months later the headmastership of a still more northerly Grammar School fell vacant, and Rowland was advised to apply for the position. His application was accepted and, with the new security that a headmastership could give, Percy must have felt that it was now time to marry. When he said that the trip to Australia on the *Omrah* was a fine one, he may have meant it in more ways than one, for he had met the future Mrs Rowland on this very trip. Her name was Jessie Longman, and she, too, was English. There had been some difficulty when the two decided to marry, for Jessie was originally coming out to keep house for her brother Heber, then editor of the *Toowoomba Chronicle*. There is some uncertainty about this, because it is also said that she was coming out to teach in Toowoomba.[37] Naturally, Jessie would have felt obliged to join Heber in Toowoomba. As it turned out, however, Heber had also met a girl whom he wanted to marry, so the problem was not as great as it had seemed. When Heber and his fiancée, Irene Bailey, married in Toowoomba, the poet George Essex Evans was best man at the wedding.

Heber Longman was to become a well-known naturalist and palaeontologist and a particular authority on giant extinct animals. From 1917 to 1945 he was the Director of the Brisbane Museum. His wife was to become the first woman to be elected to the Queensland Parliament.[38]

Rowland married Jessie Adeline Longman in Toowoomba on 7th January 1905.[39] He was then almost 35 and she 27 years old.

Of his departure from the Rockhampton school Rowland wrote:

> I was sorry to leave the Wheatcrofts and some of the boys. One of them solemnly watched me pile my Encyclopaedia Britannica and other treasures on the luggage-cart, and also a large white sulphur-crested cockatoo whose lessons in the language I proposed to resume in Townsville. "He'll see you out," was the boy's parting prophecy. Whether it is likely to be fulfilled, I cannot tell, for Cocky, having been granted a certain amount of liberty, tore the backs off some volumes of the Encyclopaedia. For this he was, after a time, forgiven. He next destroyed my wife's dressing-table articles. For this

there was no forgiveness. We gave him away and saw him no more. My wife found a less destructive pet in a baby possum.[40]

The newly-married pair then set sail for that "still more northerly Grammar School" with eager anticipation. Little did Percy Rowland, the teacher who had stayed scarcely longer than a year or two in any one place, realize then that this school was to be his home for the next 34 years.

Chapter 2
At the Townsville Grammar School

IN January 1905 Percy Rowland and his wife sailed into Townsville in the *Arawatta* and were greeted at the quay by several trustees and old boys of the school. As the headmaster's house in the grounds of the Grammar School was not quite ready for them, they spent their first few days in Townsville at the Queen's Hotel, beautifully situated on the Strand.[1]

The arrival of the new headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School was under none too auspicious circumstances. The buildings of the school had been almost destroyed the year before by the disastrous cyclone Leonta. In addition to that misfortune, the Government had decided to reduce the annual endowment which the school received from £1000 to only half that amount. The trustees, thinking that the £1000 endowment was permanent, had undertaken the rebuilding of the school themselves, instead of asking the Government to give pound for pound. A loan of £3000 had been necessary, and with the burden of interest and redemption payments each year, this meant that the school would receive only about £280 of the £500 endowment. It is little wonder that some of the trustees felt that the only solution would be to close the school.[2]

The previous headmaster, Mr F. T. Miller, had resigned as soon as it was made clear that the Government would not restore the endowment on its old basis, and his two assistants had gone with him.[3] Mr Miller, who had also been a Second Master at the Rockhampton Grammar School, was going south to take charge of a private school in New South Wales. His wife's nerves had apparently been shaken by the destruction wrought in the school by the cyclone.[4]

Rowland thus began his career at the school with these difficulties to face, and with practically no idea of how the

school was to be run. He had almost nothing to guide him in his attempt to steer the school in the course of its traditions set by the first headmaster, Mr Hodges, who had come to Townsville from a mastership at Rugby for reasons of health. Rowland had met Mr Miller, his predecessor, on the *Innamincka* at Brisbane, on the latter's journey to the southern school, and they had had only an hour's conversation—scarcely long enough to become acquainted with the intricate nature and problems of a boarding school. At the school his only guides were two senior boys, whose loyal assistance and co-operation he greatly appreciated.[5]

The school carried a heavy burden of debt for many years. The fact that interest and redemption payments had to be made each year on the loan meant that often funds were not sufficient for the proper upkeep of buildings. This was especially difficult during the years of the Great War, when the cost of materials rose. The school's jubilee year was to be in 1938, and it was hoped that, to celebrate it, old boys of the school would make a determined effort to wipe off half of what remained of the debt, so that the school could with confidence ask the Government to cancel the remainder of it. In April 1935, during the visit to Townsville of the Hon. W. P. Hynes, Home Secretary, a deputation had put before him the claims of the Townsville Grammar School. It was maintained that the Government, not the trustees, should have rebuilt the school after a disaster that was no fault of theirs, and that as over the years much more had been paid as interest and redemption than the amount of the actual loan, the remainder of the debt should be cancelled. In his annual report at Speech Day in 1935, Rowland said:

> Tonight closes the shortest day, the day with the least potentiality of sunlight in the year. Let us take it as an omen that the darkest time in the school's history closes today.[6]

It was not until more than ten years later that the debt was completely wiped off, although the Government at the time was not unsympathetic. In 1936 the school received as a complete grant the sum of £1000, which had previously been made available as a fifty per cent loan and fifty per cent grant

for repairs and painting.[7] This was one of the greatest problems Rowland had to face at the school, and it was one that lasted almost throughout his term as headmaster; but he carried on cheerfully and unremittingly through it all.

The other major difficulty was in the reduction of the endowment granted each year to the school, and Rowland fought tirelessly to have the original amount restored. He had very definite ideas on the subject of endowment. In endeavouring to justify why Grammar schools should receive any endowment at all, he said that there was a marked difference between such schools and those private schools which were not in receipt of such a grant from the Government. He maintained that the aim of the private school was to fill the headmaster's pocket, rather than to educate boys, and that no real qualification or definite standard of education was required to run a private school. To make the school pay, the headmaster could afford to pay his staff only very low salaries, and naturally this would not attract highly qualified teachers. Conversely, with an endowment, the Grammar schools could provide adequately for the staff, and thus obtain those with high qualifications. He had no intention of allowing his school to decline in efficiency by lowering itself to the level of a fourth-rate private school.[8] Rowland claimed that each provincial Grammar school should receive an endowment of £1000 and in return educate a definite number of State scholars and bursars free of charge to the State. This, he said, would be an assured method of increasing attendance at the schools.[9] By 1907 he had achieved a measure of success. The Government promised to restore the £1000 endowment on condition that the school provide free education for fifteen district scholars, to be appointed at the rate of five a year for three years.[10] Rowland had strong ideas of many aspects of education and voiced these loudly and clearly. In a paper he wrote after he had retired from teaching, he remarked that he often used to say to himself, as Beatrice said to Benedick, "I wonder you will still be talking; nobody marks you".[11] But not all Rowland's criticisms went unnoticed; he did have some degree of success

in helping to change some of the features of the Queensland education system.

Rowland gave a brief description of the school as it was in 1905:

> . . . The house was bowered in oleander trees and tropic shrubs, at the foot of the slopes of Castle Hill, a towering crag, looking more than its height of about a thousand feet. The school building, a hundred yards off, was of two storeys, red brick, with wide wooden verandahs, looking out on the sparkling Pacific half a mile away. It had no architectural pretensions, but looked strong enough to withstand the next cyclone. The dormitory was above, the teaching rooms below, while the school dining-room and kitchen adjoined the headmaster's room. . . .[12]

A tall spire rising from the front of the building was a prominent feature. Leonta had destroyed the main building and the science room, but reconstruction began immediately, and the new building opened on 8th February 1904.[13] Between that time and Rowland's retirement in 1938 many new buildings were added and many improvements made. Even as early as 1905 the chemistry laboratory at the school was reputed to be one of the best equipped in Queensland.[14] A note in the school magazine in 1910 stated that among other improvements a goat-proof fence was to be constructed,[15] and in the magazine of 1927 it was reported that electric light was soon to be installed in the school.[16] Only twenty years earlier incandescent gas had been installed in the classrooms.[17] It is interesting to compare the cost of some of these improvements with that of the new library at the Grammar School officially opened on 3rd June 1972. A sports pavilion, "a modest wooden structure which served its purpose well", was completed at a cost of £197,[18] while a new dormitory built in 1910 cost a little over £1000.[19] The new library, aptly named the "P. F. Rowland Memorial Library", was rather more expensive. The school's needs were assessed at $12,700 for the building, $3150 for books, $3785 for furniture and $340 for equipment, making a total of $19,975. These costs were in addition to $16,300 for building and $750 for books which had been paid to the school during the

Government's first three-year programme, from 1969 to 1971.[20] Prices and values have indeed changed since Percy Rowland's early years in Townsville.

The physical aspect of the school is invoked in the words of one old boy who remarked that, to him, Percy Rowland was "a major personality against a somewhat bleak background of brick and cement, of wood and iron, under the menacing bulk of Castle Hill".[21]

One of the first problems with which the new headmaster was confronted was that of securing an efficient staff. It was a most unfortunate setback that when the previous assistants had resigned with Mr Miller many parents, uncertain of the future of the school, had taken their children away. "Had they known the calibre of the new head and his staff, this need not have occurred".[22] It was no small task to find a suitable teaching staff. Rowland eventually persuaded a master at the King's School, Parramatta, to come to Townsville and teach mathematics and chemistry, subjects of which Rowland knew nothing. He also enlisted a local schoolmaster to take the junior classes.[23]

Later, on reflection, he believed that he and his wife must have been super-optimists with gambling instincts, to take on the running of this strange new school. To start with, the salary was £250 per annum, paid to him by the school trustees, in addition to the problematic profits he might make from the boarding side. In those early years he had to board the two masters at his own expense.[24] Rowland would have been the last to claim that he was a practical man; and the fact that he was not sometimes went against him. At one stage he confused the boarding fees with his own salary, and lost quite a deal of money because of this mistake. This occurred after his wife died, for Mrs Rowland had usually dealt with the business matters of the school.[25] He was a generous man; sometimes too generous for his own good, for if a boy's parents had decided to take their son away from school because they could not afford the fees, Rowland would offer to keep the boy free of charge. Naturally this would mean less money in his own pocket; but to Rowland

a boy's proper education was far more important than any amount of money.[26]

Rowland writes about the difficulties he had in obtaining good staff:

> The first ten years were the hardest. In those days, of course, there was no railway south. This, and the not altogether undeserved reputation of the Townsville climate, made it difficult to obtain suitable assistants at the salaries the trustees could afford to pay. I could tell you stories of masters who accepted their travelling-money and failed to arrive, dipsomaniacs, and impostors with forged testimonials. Fortunately we found enough of the other kind to pull us through, till the time when some of our most successful appointments were those of Old Boys, who had won scholarships at the University, and who came back to teach, men like my own successor.[27]

Members of the teaching staff that Rowland did manage to secure in his 34 years as headmaster were almost always a credit to him. He would often have to travel down to Sydney or Brisbane to appoint new staff, for there was hardly a surplus of trained and qualified teachers in Townsville. Rowland was always pleased when teachers who had been at the Grammar School obtained posts in some of the best and largest southern schools. He felt that this showed that the Townsville Grammar School had a respectable name in the south.[28]

The school was to some extent co-educational, although this had been strongly against the wishes of the first headmaster, who firmly held that it was a boys' Grammar School. However, when Mary Foley Elliot, the daughter of a local Labour member, won a scholarship to be held at the nearest Grammar School, her father over-rode Mr Hodges' protests and was supported by the Education Department. From that time on there were always two or three girls at the school, sometimes even more than twenty, and a dove-cot was built for their benefit in the headmaster's garden. As there were several girls' schools in Townsville, Rowland discouraged the attendance of girls who were not prepared to work. He regarded the arrangement as quite satisfactory, for discipline seemed to be easier and, "with a few exceptions, if boys were inclined to love-affairs, the objects of their affections were

usually girls at other schools. It is not easy to be in love with a girl who is beating you in class places every fortnight."[29] In his annual report at Speech Day in 1905, Rowland declared himself a complete convert to co-education, saying that only two years before he would have been quite hostile at the thought of it. This, he said, was probably due to the "dogmatism of ignorance". At his request the trustees abolished the limitation which had till then restricted the maximum number of girls to six.[30]

Rowland believed that, as in similar public schools in England or Australia, the boys should be left in play hours pretty much to themselves. "We have no wish to emulate what Dr Thring of Uppingham called the 'sneak-as-you-please-but-never-wet-your-feet' existence of the private school", he said.[31] Percy Rowland was not a severe headmaster. Old boys remember being allowed to wander quite freely about Townsville until Prep. time. Neither was he a lax headmaster; he did not allow the pupils too many liberties. Outings to the picture shows were restricted to four or five a term, and Saturday night was the only night of the week on which the boys might have a little entertainment. From Monday to Friday it was Prep. every night, and on Sundays it might be reading or Prep. or Bible class. Nor was extravagance encouraged; pocket money was two shillings a week at the most.[32] Rowland told the parents at one Speech Night:

> Some may think we devote too much time and attention to games, but I believe this is a mistaken opinion. A far greater danger than excessive football or cricket seems to me that of the increasing number of social attractions that assail the unwary student. I do hope parents will help me by not allowing boys an undue amount of pleasure in term time. The holidays will be better earned and more keenly enjoyed.[33]

He recounted a tale told by the headmaster of a southern school who had been appalled that in the seven weeks prior to the examinations two boys had received no less than eleven invitations to dances. Hodges, at the end of the last century, had apparently felt the same way, for in his "Rules for Day Boys" he wrote:

> Parents are earnestly requested to keep their boys from school as rarely as possible, to prevent them from entering billiard rooms and public houses, and to abstain from taking them to evening entertainments during term time except on special occasions.[34]

Rowland was very much in favour of the boarding-school system. He had been a day boy himself and sorely regretted it, for from his teaching experience in quite a number of schools he had seen that boarding-school life for the most part was wider, fuller and healthier than that of the average home. A nucleus of boarders in the school seemed essential to any vigorous athletic life or any strong feeling of *esprit de corps*. In the big day school that he had attended in London there was little athletic life; boys were anxious to get home after school rather than down to the playing fields. There were 600 boys at that school and only four cricket elevens, while there were also four cricket elevens among the 60 pupils at the Townsville Grammar School. Although no great sportsman himself, Rowland firmly believed that there was nothing like cricket and football to keep a boy's mind healthy, as well as his body; he almost forced his pupils to play sport whether they liked it or not.

He maintained that boarding schools were also superior when it came to studies. It was mainly the boarders at the Grammar School who achieved good results, perhaps because the teachers had more chance with the boys living at the school. Their school interests did not have to compete with home or female interests; there were no wasted hours in trains or buses. In a boarding school boys learnt lessons of mutual consideration and breadth of outlook; Catholics associated on terms of equality with Presbyterians, and judges' sons with artisans'.[35] "Boss" Rowland, as he was called, was extremely democratic in his outlook, stressing often that all religions and all classes of boys were welcome at the Grammar School. In saying that the boarding school system was one of the greatest factors for good in Queensland he was not speaking out of self-interest for he, personally, would rather have been the master of a day school, at the cost of a reduced income. To be able to leave school at four

o'clock and forget one's responsibilities by returning to the privacy of home life was something few men did not enjoy.[36]

At the beginning of Rowland's term as headmaster, in January 1905, there were fewer than forty pupils attending, compared with 63 at the end of the year before. Only seven or eight of these were boarders. Prospects at the school then were not especially bright, for at that time North Queensland had a very small population, communications were primitive, and people were not conscious of the importance of secondary schooling. In the North there appeared to be a spirit of defeatism. Not only the southerners, but even the residents of Townsville, were of the opinion that the climate of North Queensland was not suitable for a white population. Rowland entered into long and fierce debate on this issue through the press, and it was largely through his efforts that this view was dispelled.[37]

As 1905 wore on numbers improved to 46. Rowland felt that an increase to seventy pupils would enable the school to pay its way, with the help of an increased number of scholarships.[38] In those first years of the twentieth century scholarships were few and far between. In 1896 twenty boys had come to the school with State scholarships, but by 1905, after regulations had reduced the total number of scholarships to 36, there was only one boy at the school who had been granted one. It was made harder by the fact that winners could take their scholarships wherever they wished, and this meant, of course, that Brisbane schools had an advantage over Queensland provincial schools. However, the school trustees were granting a number of scholarships every year, as were such other organizations as the Cleveland Masonic Lodge, St Andrew's Lodge, and the Townsville Grammar School Old Boys Union.[39]

Rowland felt that the apathy in North Queensland towards secondary education was partly due to the lack of a university in Queensland, and yet, even after the university had been established in Brisbane, there was still a considerable dearth of interest in higher education. Compared with Toowoomba, a city of about the same size as Townsville, secondary scholars were few.[40]

Numbers at the school increased steadily until the war years. In 1915 there were 112 pupils attending but, in the face of the Great War and the drought that North Queensland was experiencing at the time, these numbers could not be expected to be maintained.[41] It should be mentioned here that the Grammar School made a gallant contribution to the war effort. By the end of the war 133 old boys had been at the front, and of these thirteen, as well as one master, had been killed.[42]

More than a hundred pupils were attending in 1935. Rowland frequently lamented the fact that so many pupils were tempted into employment by banks or business houses even before they had completed the Junior examination course; too often there was a considerable drop in numbers because of this. But he was pleased that among the pupils there were some who came from such distant places as Sydney and Launceston, proving that the Grammar School was certainly spreading its influence. "How far this little candle throws its beams," he said.[43]

As numbers increased so did the number and variety of scholarships offered to secondary students. In 1908 the Charters Towers School of Mines was annually offering three Exhibitions to be awarded on the results of the Sydney Senior Examination. These were worth £50 per annum in addition to the remission of fees.[44] On Speech Day in December 1908 the Chairman of Trustees, Mr Barnett, told the people that if anyone wished to assist boys and girls to an education they could not do better than donate ten guineas to provide a scholarship.[45]

With the establishment of the University of Queensland in 1910, greater opportunities for obtaining scholarships were made available; twenty scholarships would be awarded on the results of the senior examination open to all Grammar Schools, High Schools and denominational schools in Queensland. These would be tenable for three years at the university, providing free education, with an allowance of £26 per annum for Brisbane residents and £52 if the student lived elsewhere.[46] Previously, the only chance of a university

education came from winning one of the three Queensland Exhibitions; one of these had been won by a student from the Townsville Grammar School in 1909.[47] One of the new university scholarships was first won by a Grammar School pupil in 1911.[48] During the nine years since the scholarships had been introduced there had been only one year, 1917, in which the Townsville Grammar School had failed to gain at least one scholarship. In 1927 the number of scholarships was raised to 25, widening, as Rowland said, the top rung of the ladder from the State schools to the universities in Australia's ambitious education scheme.[49] In his term as headmaster Rowland saw more than 400 of his pupils successfully pass the Junior examination and more than ninety pass the Senior, and a selected few gain important scholarships. Two of his boys won the coveted Rhodes Scholarship and went to Oxford. The first was G. F. Hall in 1910. He was a dark boy: his mother was an Englishwoman and his father a Tobago negro. He was a fine athlete, excelling in almost every sport, and was a brilliant student as well. Rowland admired this boy perhaps more than any other boy he had ever taught, and felt very deeply about the fact that the strong colour prejudice of the time hindered Hall's election. He wrote:

> The son of the then Premier of Queensland was a rival candidate. Governor Macgregor, the Chairman of the Election Committee, insisted that Rhodes intended to draw no colour line; had he not allotted scholarships to natives of India? Our candidate was elected and held his scholarship at Lincoln College.[50] At Oxford, too, Hall's sporting ability was never acknowledged, because of the same prejudice which was at its strongest in the Old Country at that time.[51]

Chester Parker won the second Rhodes Scholarship in 1938, and there would perhaps have been a third had not A. R. Brookes drowned tragically at Southport in 1912, not long after he had left school.[52]

Rowland did his best to preserve the fine old traditions of an English public school, imparted to the Grammar School in the beginning by Hodges, and worthily maintained by Miller, his successor. He believed that it was an important

thing for the Townsville Grammar School to retain this feeling "here amid the material aims of a new country".[53] His main fear for the Grammar School was that it might be taken over by the Government. T. J. Ryan, when Premier, had told Rowland that his party meant to do this as soon as possible; fortunately this did not happen. The establishment too, of State High Schools, not only in Townsville but in many of the local centres to which the Grammar School looked for its boarders, seemed another "nail in their coffin". Then the establishment at Charters Towers, eighty miles away, in a better climate, of boarding schools connected with the Roman Catholic, Anglican and other churches, also challenged the Grammar as a boarding school. "It looked as if we might come to grief, ground between the rival forces of Church and State. However, survive we did".[54]

It has been said of Percy Rowland, "Gladly did he learn and gladly teach".[55] His efforts to impart a love of language and literature to the boys he taught, often under adverse conditions, were tireless. In his 34 years at the school he carried a full assistant master's share of the teaching as well as performing heavy administrative duties. Of the forty periods in the school programme for the week, he regularly taught 37, taking almost the whole of the English, French and Latin classes for the Junior and Senior. It was nothing for him to teach Greek to an occasional pupil in his spare time, to begin his active teaching at seven o'clock, work the normal school day, and then at night teach some small boy from the west the rudiments of English.[56]

Rowland impressed others with his mastery of Greek, French, Latin and English literature and one bishop, who frequently listened to Rowland lecturing to men in the Cathedral, remarked that he believed no one else in Australia could equal his vivid power of exposition.[57] He loved teaching English in particular, and endeavoured to make the boys appreciate Shakespeare and other great literary masters; he failed to see how a boy could be good at mathematics and not appreciate Shakespeare. To him Shakespeare was the greatest writer of the English language, a mountain that

towered over all, and he was quite offended when a pupil asked him if he thought there was any truth in the theory that Shakespeare's plays had been written by Bacon. He often said that if he had to live on a desert island the two things he would take with him would be the works of Shakespeare and the Bible.[58]

Brilliant though he was, Percy Rowland could never master mathematics; he found it difficult even to work out examination percentages. But he was an extremely able and learned teacher of literature and languages. His was not the practice of drumming facts into his pupils, with the sole aim of getting them through their examinations; too often this was the case with some of the not very highly qualified teachers in those days. Rather, he taught his pupils to think for themselves, to use their own initiative; he frequently spoke to them on such subjects as architecture, painting and sculpture—subjects outside the school curriculum—and often, at Call Over in the morning or in the dining-room on Sunday nights, read extracts to them from well-known books. One old boy recalls two of these tales especially well; one was the story of Socrates who, condemned to drink hemlock for allegedly corrupting the youth, said to his judges, "And now we go away, you to life and I to death. Which of the two is better is known only to God." Another was an extract from Thomas More's *Utopia*, the story about the imaginary land where children were taught to despise jewellery. One day an ambassador arrived, decked out in shining jewels, and this caused the children to pinch the legs of their mothers and say, "Look, Mother, how great a lubber doth yet wear pearls and precious stones as if he were a little child still."[59]

Rowland was a man of great humour. It is said that no boy in any of his classes was ever able to go to sleep, however sultry or oppressive the weather. This was perhaps because he knew how to make a class laugh, for he had a stock of jokes about the work he was teaching. Moreover, he had the ability to make dull subjects interesting and bright subjects enthralling.[60] He has been called one of the most amusing of headmasters; his whole body rocked with laughter when he

saw a joke, and it is this trait, perhaps, that most endeared him to so many of those who knew him.

Percy Rowland, in remarking on the difficulties faced in the early days at the school, said:

> The brave lady who shared the task with me had need of all her courage. While rearing a family of young children, to discharge the duties of housekeeper and matron in the Townsville climate was an exacting task.[61]

Jessie Rowland was a delicate Englishwoman, hardly accustomed to the extreme heat of the north and, like many English people, not one to take very kindly to it. But she persevered bravely for more than twenty years, helping Rowland in the management of the school, in the sickroom, in the book room and, in times of emergency, in the classroom. She was loved and respected by generations of boys who had passed through the school. Jessie died after a painful and protracted illness on 26th September 1926; a letter from an old boy of the school tells how deeply her loss was felt by all who knew her:

> There are men in the West and the East who will mourn her, leaders in science and industry of every kind to-day, who will find the memory flash back to a time in the dim and distant past when the friendship of this lady was their only memory of home and a mother's care: and if mouldering bones could speak, a blessing would rise to her from many a Flanders and Gallipoli grave. Firm yet kind, dignified yet openly friendly, gracious and sweet, Mrs Rowland stood as an edifying example of womankind to boys at their most impressionable age, and thus filled the gaps in an academic training which lies at the foundation of many fine characters to-day.[62]

There were four children born to the Rowlands in the early years in Townsville: three daughters, and a son. The girls attended St Anne's, the Church of England Girls' School in Townsville, while Philip, the son, received his education at the Grammar School under the guidance of his father. He is frequently mentioned in the Cricket and Swimming notes in the Townsville Grammar School magazines. Marian and Frances, the two eldest girls, were later sent to Ascham School in Sydney, the headmistress of which was a good friend of Mrs Rowland's.

Marian and Frances both married men who had taught at the Grammar School. After her mother died Marian, still only a young girl, took on the difficult task of school matron. Tom Milfull, who had previously taught at the High School in Townsville, came over to teach at the Grammar School so that Marian could stay there to look after her father. Her sister Frances had gone to study at the University of Queensland. Marian and her husband remained at the school until the end of 1933. After that, Milfull taught at the Brisbane Grammar School and at the North Shore School in Sydney, from which he retired in 1971 after 34 years.

Frances married Norman Pinwill, an old boy and also a teacher of the Townsville Grammar School. The couple moved to Sydney a short time before the Milfulls left Townsville, and Pinwill is still teaching at the Scots College in Sydney.

Joan, Rowland's youngest daughter, joined the Australian Army of Nursing Sisters in World War II and went overseas in the *Queen Mary*. Philip, after trying tobacco farming at Dimbulah, also joined the services and completed an engineering trade during the war. Since the war he has been at the Pioneer Sugar Mill near Ayr. Joan married and settled at Dalby, in southern Queensland.

All four of Rowland's children married and raised families, and visiting them all gave Rowland much pleasure in his old age. To his grandchildren he was known as "Big Daddy".[63]

Chapter 3
Retirement

AFTER 34 years of long, laborious and devoted service, Percy Rowland retired from the Townsville Grammar School. It was a hard step to take for one who had spent so many of the best years of his life fighting for the recognition of the school and the achievements of its students by other larger institutions. At times he had had to fight for its very survival. An article written by Colin Bingham, an old boy of the school, suggests the enormous loss sustained not only by the school, its teachers and pupils, but also by the people of Townsville when Rowland decided to retire:

> The retirement of Mr P. F. Rowland from the headmastership of the Townsville Grammar School at the end of this year will close the splendid association of a fine teacher with an institution which has maintained, through many vicissitudes, a tradition of faithful service to the best educational ideals of the community. For more than a generation that tradition has drawn its strength from the personality and teaching ability of this headmaster to a far greater extent than would be possible in a school where the endowment was less niggardly, the environment less severe, and the staffing problems less persistent.[1]

Rowland wrote a letter which was published in the *Townsville Bulletin* at the end of 1938, explaining his reasons for retiring. He mentioned the extreme financial difficulties to which the school had been subject in almost every year he had spent there, as well as the alarming possibility of the Government's taking over the Grammar schools. One year they had even gone so far as to take the measurements of all the buildings. The Great Depression, the inadequacy of the endowment, and the ever-increasing salaries of teachers also contributed to what might be called a feeling of despair, or at least a sense of the futility of it all, on the part of Rowland. Had he been a younger man he might have felt more inclined

to struggle on as he had indeed done for 34 years; but when the idea that the reorganization of the school management might be the solution of the problems was bruited, he felt that he was too old to cope with it. He said:

> At 68 I feel too old a dog to learn new tricks, and when the secretary resigned as from December 31st I followed his example. My resignation was all the easier because I felt sure that my successor would be my old pupil, Mr T. B. Whight, who is just the man for the position—an ideal appointment, with youth, popularity and many-sided ability in his favour.[2]

Perhaps Rowland had some influence when the new appointment was being made, for it was Whight who became the new headmaster. Rowland must have felt satisfied to leave his beloved school in the capable hands of a man he knew so well—a man who had excelled at school as a boy, and then as a master at several schools in Sydney, one who could be relied upon to carry on the school as Rowland would have liked to do himself.

In those 34 years Rowland had, to the people who knew him or knew of him, become almost as much a Townsville landmark as Castle Hill. It is sad to think that, after his untiring efforts for the good of the school, after the long years of difficulties and distress through which he carried on cheerfully, always thinking of his pupils before himself, he could not be rewarded with more than a mere pittance from the school management. Old boys of the school took up a collection on his retirement, to enable him to go home to England to visit his aged mother and other members of his family; but even this, though in itself a fine gesture, was scarcely fitting recompense for all that Rowland had done for so many of them. Old boys who had prospered after leaving school, men who had entered affluent professions, could have done more to help Rowland, who had little money of his own. Instead, barely enough money was raised to pay the return fare to England by ship. From all the hundreds of boys who had passed through the school in Rowland's time a mere £150 was collected. A further £50 was raised by the Brisbane branch of the Old Boys' Union.[3] Among these men were some who, as the young sons of parents who could

not afford boarding fees, had been taken in free of charge by Rowland out of the kindness of his heart and his concern that every boy should receive an education.

"Boss" Rowland set off for England despite the fact that World War II was imminent, and arrived there in June 1939 in the *Orama*.[4]

For some years "Essays in Brief", written by Rowland, had appeared in the *Townsville Bulletin*. In England he did not forget his Townsville readers: he sent back many delightful essays recounting impressions of places and people formed during this year in England. They bear such titles as: "Oxford Again After Fifty Years", "Winter in England", and "London in Wartime".

Rowland's first three days in the Old Country were spent in London, visiting in particular the Tate Gallery, the National Gallery, and the annual exhibition of the Royal Academy; he was delighted to see once again his "old friends", as he called the famous works of art. London, he found, was strangely unaltered. The differences he did notice were really only superficial, the most noticeable being the change from the two-decker buses drawn by horses to the smarter-looking two-decker motor buses.[5] He says of London in an article entitled "A Year in England":

> In its main features London does not change. I had not been there half an hour before I felt at home once more in the heart of the empire. My first morning I made my way to the Mecca of British pilgrims, Westminster Abbey. I stood once more beside the effigy of Queen Elizabeth. I stood beside the stone beneath which, as a young man, I had watched all that was mortal of Tennyson lowered to its last resting place. What does 34 years mean within those historic walls? Little indeed.
>
> In the afternoon I made my way to Regent's Park, where there was an open-air performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. The exquisitely varied foliage made an ideal setting. As for the acting—well, I could remember Ellen Terry as Beatrice, and Irving in what some thought his best part, Benedick. But I was not disposed to be critical, and enjoyed every minute. To complete a perfect day, I ended with a Bernard Shaw comedy. There were three running in London at the time, and I chose *Geneva*, in which, under thin disguises,

Hitler and Mussolini and Franco appeared before the footlights and indulged in witty Shavian dialectic. . . .[6]

The theatre was Percy Rowland's great passion, and he had been virtually starved of art and culture in his 34 years in Townsville. How he must have enjoyed the opportunity of choosing which plays he might watch, and to see on some days at least three different productions. He says in his essay "From London":

> One of the greatest surprises to most Australians on visiting London is the vigorous life of the theatre. In spite of the cinema, there were two dozen theatres presenting plays every night, in addition to weekly matinees. As well, there was the open-air theatre in Regent's Park, with an auditorium to seat well over a thousand.

While in London during this year abroad, he spent some time "batching" in his brother's little house in Streatham and here he was forced, once again, to accustom himself to the extreme cold of the English climate. At the time there was a series of heavy frosts, and all his efforts were concentrated on keeping himself warm by piling up the fire, endeavouring to prevent the water pipes from bursting, and securing the services of plumbers when they did burst. It was even necessary to buy a greatcoat—something that was never needed in Townsville.[7] It was not a pleasant time for one so accustomed to the mild winter months experienced in North Queensland.

Rowland re-visited Oxford and enjoyed once again what was, to him, one of the loveliest sights in the world—the view from Headington Hill of the poplars and dreaming spires of the grand old university town. If he had found London unchanged, it was quite the opposite at Oxford. Old familiar buildings he remembered from his student days had gone, and new ones had sprung up in their place; the poplars in front of Wadham College had been felled; motor buses now operated on the High Street.[8]

At Oxford he visited Chester Parker, the second Rhodes Scholar from the Townsville Grammar School. Parker was residing at Christ Church, otherwise known as "The House",

one of the largest men's colleges in Oxford. He dined with Parker in the great Christ Church hall, the finest in Oxford. The walls were adorned with portraits in oils of the great men educated at the College, Gladstone and Lewis Carroll amongst them. With Parker, also, he visited the Ashmolean Museum and several other colleges which he had known well fifty years before. To gaze upon the delightful gardens, the ivy-laced walls of age-old buildings, on church spires—what feelings of nostalgia these must have aroused in such a person as Percy Rowland, who said in an essay:

> . . . Apart from the tradition of great men and noble thoughts associated with the ancient university, there are things that no one who has passed through its gates can ever forget, things that haunt their memories till their dying day. . . . Into their souls it cannot but instil some tincture of the poet's faith that
>
> *Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all*
> *Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.*[9]

Rowland also explored Oxford with another friend, then visited Stratford-upon-Avon, where the annual Shakespearean Festival was taking place. As well as a love of Shakespeare, Rowland appears to have had a deep sense of the importance of history, an intense interest in the historical background of a place. At Stratford he was charmed by its old-world loveliness and by the swans "floating on the quiet willow-shaded waters, past the church where William the Great lies buried".[10]

He goes on to describe other places of interest:

> . . . I went to Birmingham, a busy city of many industries, the second largest town in England. There is no denying that much of Birmingham is ugly, but it is not an unredeemed ugliness. There are open spaces and fine buildings; an excellent Art Gallery; some beautiful Burne Jones windows in the Georgian cathedral.
>
> I also visited South Wales, admired the busy port and seaside resort of Barry, and the fine town of Cardiff, with its university and many other excellent modern buildings, built before the bandbox style became the rage. At Bristol I saw the beautiful church of St Mary Redcliffe, haunted with

> memories of young Chatterton, foremost of the "heirs of unfulfilled renown". I heard evensong at the Cathedral, and marvelled once more at the Clifton Suspension Bridge. I spent, too, a night at Bath, a glorious specimen of unchanged eighteenth-century architecture. I stood on the steps of the house where Jane Austen once dwelt, and I looked at the view over the gardens on which those clear-sighted quizzical eyes of hers must have often gazed. I noted that the house once lived in by the great Lord Chesterfield was now inhabited by a "turf accountant"; sadly out of business now, I fear, as all racing was stopped by the war. . . .
>
> I must not omit a delightful visit to Bromley, Kent, to the pretty home of "Richmal Crompton", author of the "William" books and interesting novels; to Sir Sydney Cockerall at Kew, and H. W. Nevinson at Hampstead.

Ruddigore at Sadlers Wells, *The Corn is Green, The Doctor's Dilemma, Major Barbara, In Good King Charles's Golden Days* delighted one who had been starved of "flesh and blood" drama for so many years. Later he enjoyed Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral, King Lear* and *The Devil's Disciple*. One afternoon he attended a meeting of the Poetry Society in Portman Square. A grandson of Tennyson's was in the chair, and among those present was the veteran war-correspondent, H. W. Nevinson, "chafing that his eighty years kept him from yet another adventure".[11] Rowland visited this grand old man at his home in Hampstead and later wrote an article about him saying in this that he valued nothing in his year in England more highly than the privilege of meeting and talking with this man whom he regarded as "the greatest of his time".[12]

He spent many months of his time in England

> . . . at an old house adjoining the picturesque disused windmill near Hartest, a village midway between Sudbury and Bury St Edmunds. The surrounding Suffolk country is quietly beautiful; undulating hills, cultivated in fields of barley, wheat and beetroot; the hedges separating the fields green with hazel and elm and blackberry shrubs; the farmlands not divided in formal squares, but following the winding roads and lanes and the lie of the country in a large patchwork of infinite charm. Nor is the beauty confined to the summer. Winter does not mean dead blackness, but a harmony of grays and browns,

> dull greens and misty blues. In its robe of snow the landscape has a strange attractiveness. The radiance of autumn and spring are an indelible memory.[13]

Rowland stayed there at Mill House with his relatives, possibly with some of his sisters and his mother, who must have been a great age by then, for Rowland himself celebrated his seventieth birthday in April 1940, only a few months before he returned to Australia.

In the last week before he left England Rowland made an excursion to Salisbury Cathedral, "the most perfect specimen of Gothic architecture in the country". He marvelled, as always, at the solemn yet majestic sense of the history of ages past with which it was imbued, and expressed the hope that, whatever buildings might suffer from enemy ruthlessness, England might at least be spared Salisbury Cathedral and Westminster Abbey.[14]

His time in England came to an end, and at the beginning of July 1940 he made use of the return half of his ticket on the Orient line. Rowland arrived in Sydney in the second week of August after a voyage without mishap.[15]

What really were his reactions on seeing again after so long all these familiar places, and on being thrust back into the English way of life? His strongest impressions were of an England that was at war. He was there in London in the grim days before the declaration; he was among the crowds who used to gather in Downing Street and at Parliament House, endeavouring to catch a glimpse of Neville Chamberlain or Winston Churchill or the veteran Lloyd George. He described the changes wrought in London and throughout the country by the war:

> The war descended like a pall on London. The dismal effects of the black-out on the great city transcend all imagination. Air-raid shelters appeared everywhere; buildings were sand-bagged and barricaded; children were evacuated in scores of thousands to places that often proved more dangerous than London. Months passed. Slowly Londoners became accustomed to black-out conditions. They awaited the inevitable with stoical courage.[16]

Rowland was impressed with the fine spirit of the people who faced the hardships of war: the rationed food; the separation of families; the ruin of businesses; the black-outs, with their heavy toll of dead; the nightly, daily, hourly danger of violent death. But, as he said, they tolerated the hardships because they were "fighting for their lives and the liberty that is dearer to them than life". On reaching Australia Rowland was struck by the calm aloofness from and indifference to the scenes of war. Superficially, at least, life seemed to go on as usual; Sydney and Melbourne streets were gaily lit compared with the almost continual darkness of London; newspapers were full-sized broadsheets, full of racing and sporting items and advertisements.[17] But Australia too had been affected by the war and Rowland realized this soon enough. Thousands of young Australians had enlisted; Australia was contributing as much as any country to the war effort.

The Oxford that Rowland visited in 1939 was vastly different in many ways from the university to which he had gone in 1889. Proper bathrooms had been introduced, whereas, in his time, all the student had had was a can full of hot water poured into his tin bath by a scout. Girls were now not only allowed the privilege of an education, but also that of attending lectures with the men and even the liberty of entrance into the men's rooms, a thing unheard of in Rowland's student days. He looked forward to the time when Australia might send her girl scholars, as well as her men, across the sea to reap the benefits of the education this fine university could offer.[18]

Rowland was impressed with the England he had not seen for at least 35 years. He had expected to find it changed, almost unrecognizable. He found it the same under the grim war-troubled surface. The people were still essentially the same; the old familiar streets and churches and parks of London were still there; and the beautiful English countryside remained as it had been all those years before.

Much as he loved England and the family he still had there, Rowland loved Australia more. He had been barely a

year in the Old Country before he was once again embarking on the voyage home. It was the third time Rowland had set sail for Australia from England, and it was to be the last.

On returning to Australia, Rowland settled in Brisbane. It had been his favourite question, when in England, to ask the people he met if they knew the whereabouts of Brisbane. Very rarely did he receive a correct answer. He had discovered that few of the English were at all interested in Australia and its topography.[19]

In Brisbane, Rowland moved into a rented room in a house in Merthyr Road, New Farm, where he tutored his landlady's children free of charge.[20] It was a lonely life that he led here, for he had none of his immediate family around him. His son and his youngest daughter were in the services, and his two other daughters and their families were in Sydney. His wife Jessie's brother, Heber Longman, was now Director of the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, and Rowland often used to visit Heber and his wife.[21] The monotony of life was also broken by visits from boys whom he had taught, years earlier, at the Townsville Grammar School. How many old boys are moved to keep in touch in such a way with their old headmaster? Several came to see him at his room in New Farm, where he still had the nucleus of his classical library. He had sold the greater part of it when he left Townsville.[22] One of these old boys tells of the last time he saw "Boss" Rowland:

> In 1940, after the Blitz of London, I was walking along Queen Street, Brisbane, when I saw him coming towards me, looking very solemn and much slower. It seemed wrong not to see the twinkle in his eye.[23]

But Rowland still had his witty sense of humour and that zest for life which had distinguished him when he was headmaster in Townsville.

In retirement Rowland continued with his writing. He had many articles printed in papers and journals, particularly in *Meanjin*, and read interesting papers before various groups. One of these, which he read before the Constitutional Club in August 1940, was the paper describing his year in England.

By this time Rowland was over seventy years of age, and not as strong as he once was. After an attack of pneumonia and a lengthy stay in the Brisbane General Hospital, he went to live at his daughter Marian's home in Sydney. She and her family felt that he was no longer able to look after himself and would be helpless if he became ill again. Rowland was reluctant to give up his independence, but he realized it would be for the best. He enjoyed life at Lane Cove, telling stories and reading books to his grandchildren, and receiving visits from former students of the Grammar School.[24] He says in a letter to a friend, with his usual humour:

> . . . I am not too active on my pins, but what can septuagenarians expect? I miss Brisbane friends and the *Telegraph*, which printed so many of my articles, and Mrs Nogh's library—but Marian's young children are cheerful company.[25]

Rowland's days were drawing in. He had left Brisbane early in 1944 and by October 1945 he was dead. A letter written to Whight, then headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School, by Rowland's son-in-law Tom Milfull, recounts the circumstances of his death:

> P.F. passed away on Sunday after a rather gruelling six weeks in hospital after a coronary artery thrombosis which left him very helpless. He loathed the hospital and his enforced inactivity; and, as recovery would have meant a semi-invalidism, one can only be thankful for his sake that the end came when it did. After all, if we ourselves reach that age, after a full and useful life, and can still retain the enthusiasm and vigour and sense of humour which were his to the end, we shall not have much to regret. Even in hospital he would struggle hard and finally achieve some quip to show the old spirit was not dead.[26]

Rowland's death on 14th October 1945 at the age of 75 brought to a close the career of a man who loved life in all its forms, who was interested in everyone and everything around him; a man who could carry on cheerfully despite life's difficulties and setbacks. One of his daughters once said:

The thing I remember most about P.F.R. was how much he enjoyed life—

Every day was a fresh beginning,
Every day was the world made new.

It's a fortunate trait to have, isn't it?[27]

Chapter 4
Works of P.F.R.

PERCY ROWLAND showed promise as a writer at an early age. A love of literature had been instilled in him in early childhood, particularly by his father, who loved to read to his children on Sunday evenings. Rowland recalls that it was often a chore for some of them to sit still and listen attentively, but also that he must have listened pretty well after all, for years later several of the books he had heard still stood out clearly in his memory.

> My first book *Round About Old England* was given to me when I was four. I remember a severe scolding for not saying thank you properly to my great-aunt Sophia, who gave it to me. As I was no Macaulay it was some time before I made much of the words, but the pictures were a source of delight. Aesop's *Fables* was my next treasure, not in such a pappy version as children now get it, but a good stout volume with forcible illustrations.[1]

In his early school days his reading was mostly in Latin and Greek. Of English literature, Rowland remembers feeling that he ought to like Shelley:

> I was bewitched with the rhythm of the Skylark Ode, and approved of learning it by heart, while I resented having to learn Macaulay's *Lays* and Scott's *Last Minstrel* in which I could see no poetry.[2]

The language of much of Rowland's writings is noticeably poetic. He preferred Shakespeare's comedies to his tragedies; and his own work has a humorous rather than a serious bent. Neither did he have

> . . . any love for poets who deal in cross-eyed, hard-word puzzles and conceal their thoughts and feelings with multifarious wrappings and packings, on painfully unfastening which we find there is, after all, very little there.[3]

While he was studying at Oxford Rowland's chief literary enthusiasm was for Ruskin. He founded an unobtrusive Ruskin Society with about a dozen members from different colleges, and they used to meet in each other's rooms and discuss his works. It was a memorable experience for Rowland when he heard Ruskin, a "picturesque, snowy-bearded man", lecturing to children at Bedford Park.[4]

His other love at Oxford was for Shakespeare: he became chairman of a College Shakespearean Society. Rowland's knowledge and understanding of Shakespeare have been described as "something that one meets with once in a lifetime".[5] Many years later, when he was headmaster of the Grammar School at Townsville, he wrote a humorous series, *Shakespeare in Australian,* to provide publicity for Alan Wilkie's season of Shakespearean plays in 1921. Art and culture were sadly lacking in the small northern city; a visit by a company of Shakespearean players was a rare occurrence, and Rowland attempted to make the public aware of the importance of such a visit. He admired the way in which C. J. Dennis had written the story of Romeo and Juliet in *The Sentimental Bloke*, and he copied this style in writing up the stories of several other plays, including *Macbeth*, *Hamlet* and *Othello*. The comical language of these appealed to the public and, being published in the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* under the pen-name of John Bedford, they did much towards making the season of plays a success.[6] P.F.R. never despaired of developing in Townsville a love of Shakespeare and the classics.

Rowland won several prizes for literary work at school and at university. Chiefly concerned with English literature, these essays demonstrated his natural flair for writing, which was to become more and more apparent as he grew older.

His first attempt at something larger than prize-winning essays and articles to the local newspaper or various journals was the book entitled *The New Nation*. This, as I have mentioned, was written in Sydney in 1901, between the time Rowland resigned from the Boys' High School at Christchurch, New Zealand, and the time when he returned to

England in June 1902. In the intervening period, as tutor to the two sons of his wealthy acquaintance in Sydney, he was able to observe Australian politics at the time of Federation. Rowland had an intense interest in politics and found there was good material for this book. Its full title was *The New Nation: A Sketch of the Social, Political and Economic Conditions and Prospects of the Australian Commonwealth*, and it was dedicated to "The People of the New Nation and the Old. Two Nations but one People". The book was prefaced by a verse about Australia of Rowland's own composition. Although several portions of the book had already appeared in both Australian and English newspapers and journals, the book itself was assembled in 1901, and additions were made in England during revision in June 1902 and at the proof stage from October 1902 to January 1903.[7] Despite favourable reviews it did not have the success which Rowland believed it deserved. At the time of publication the book sold for 7s. 6d.; but when Rowland went back to England in 1939 he bought a copy of it at a bookstall for 7d.[8]

Although he had lived in Australia for a relatively short time, Rowland had closely observed many different aspects of the new nation. The titles of his chapters suggest the range of aspects to which he had given his attention: "Political Life in the States"; "The Federal Movement"; "Aspects of Australian Social Life"; "Art, Music and the Drama"; "The Economic Outlook"; "Education in Australia"; "The Case for Imperialism", and so on.

His object in writing the book was

> to afford those who have not visited it a candid and impartial account of the young Commonwealth—the kind of account that he himself endeavoured, but failed, to obtain before he set out for what remains to most Englishmen an unknown land.

Rowland claimed that the book

> however inadequate, honestly, without malice and without extenuation, records Australia as it appears to him after seven years' collection, and careful correction, of impressions.[9]

The most significant parts of the book are the chapter dealing with Australian politics and the case of Nationalism versus Imperialism, and the sections concerned with education in Australia.

An early review of the book stated:

> Mr Rowland, although apparently of British birth, has lived long enough in Australia to become thoroughly impressed with the Australian point of view, and his presentation of it may be warmly recommended to those multitudes of Englishmen who at present have no conception of the importance of the future conflict between Nationalism and Imperialism in the British Empire. His very title is significant, *The New Nation*. Canada has long proclaimed herself a nation, South Africa will do so in time, and so too will New Zealand. What is to be the ultimate common denominator between all these nations? Mr Rowland has obviously not made up his mind, so he gives us two chapters at the end of his book—one stating the case for Australian Nationalism, the other for British Imperialism.[10]

In Chapters XIII and XIV, in which Rowland thus states the cases, he systematically and clearly sets down the disadvantages he feels are inherent in Australia's remaining a part of the Empire, demonstrating, as he does so, a close knowledge of the Australian political scene. In Chapter XIV he maintains that the Imperial ideal, "if fairly stated, is quite noble, and much more likely, in the existing state of the world, to yield satisfactory results"; yet for Imperialism to be successful many changes had to be made.[11] In speaking of Australia's ties with England, Rowland had earlier lamented what he called the "Colonial Fallacy"; that is, the unimaginative fidelity of Australians to English customs which were entirely unsuited to the Australian climate and way of life.[12]

The chapter on political life in the colonies gives a very succinct account of the position in 1900. It is concise and to the point, with facts and figures frequently backing up his statements. Rowland is always careful to illustrate a point he makes with numbers and prices and percentages when they are available. In contrast to a chapter such as this is one dealing with external conditions, in which the writer discusses

the climate, the scenery and the capital cities. Here his language and descriptions frequently lean towards the poetic and the fanciful—at times a little flowery for the taste of the modern reader. Yet here, too, Rowland intersperses statistics and hard facts which give his poetry a certain realism.

In *The New Nation* Rowland summarizes the results of his study of the primary and secondary school systems of the colonies, as well as of the universities.[13] An Appendix entitled "A Plea for English Literature in Primary Schools" had originally been read as a paper before the Education section of the Australasian Science Association at Hobart in January 1902.[14] At this stage Rowland had not even had the experience of teaching in an Australian school, yet he appears to have had a far greater knowledge and understanding of the education system than most of the teachers of the time. Rowland found much to criticize in the education system then, just as he did in later years when he was headmaster of the Townsville Grammar School. He was always outspoken in his criticisms, and, although he often felt that he was wasting his time, it is evident that much of what he said had some effect.

One of his primary concerns was the "disgraceful" salaries that teachers were paid. Yet, he added, these salaries were often higher than the teachers were worth, for most of those who became teachers "passed from scholar to pupil teacher, and from pupil teacher to teacher without receiving any training or, in fact, any education worthy of the name".[15] It also dismayed him that pupils could get through the curriculum with the minimum amount of work, being supposed to spend not more than two hours over their homework each night while the "poor drudge who is called a schoolmaster" must spend hours each night correcting books and preparing lessons. Rowland describes the pupil as

> . . . our usual modern clever boy, facile of memory, impotent of thought, sterile of imagination, calculated automatically to reproduce at a few hours' notice the fancy pictures of (more or less) historical scenes and characters, derived from the unnecessary toil of his jaded schoolmaster.[16]

His opinions were modified after some practical experience in teaching.

The obvious value of *The New Nation* is primarily in its informative character. Rowland's aim was to provide a readable and realistic yet also entertaining account of life in Australia. He succeeded in doing so. Rowland makes apparent not only his knowledge of the politics, economics and social concerns of the Australia he knew in 1901, but also his understanding of Australian history. His first three chapters are concerned with the convict settlements and the first proconsuls, the earliest beginnings of the colonies, and the beginnings of Independence. In a chapter entitled "Romantic Elements in Australian History" he dealt with such topics as the aborigines, the bushrangers and the "romances" of exploration and gold. Basically it is very precise and factual, but the emotive, descriptive passages scattered throughout the book dispel the feeling that this is simply another history text-book.

Perhaps his failure to achieve the success which he thought *The New Nation* deserved discouraged Rowland from having any more books published in the usual way, although it is hard to imagine a man of his character and humour being permanently deterred from trying again. In fact, he had intentions of writing another book about his experiences as a teacher, but only the type-written copy of Chapter Five, entitled "Rockhampton and Townsville" has been preserved. In this he had set down his impressions of the Grammar schools in the two towns, and had recounted several humorous anecdotes about the children he taught. History does not relate what the four chapters preceding this one contained. He may have intended it as an account, not only of his teaching experiences in Australia, but also of those in Ireland, England, and New Zealand. Rowland described his teaching career from his graduation from Oxford in 1893 until his retirement from the Townsville Grammar School in 1938, in a paper entitled "Forty-four Years in School". This was read at a New Education Fellowship meeting in Brisbane. The second half of the paper contains Rowland's criticisms of the

Queensland Education Department, one of his favourite hobby-horses.

A relative of Rowland's claims that he wrote a book for schoolboys which was not successful; he knew how to handle schoolboys, but could not write for them. If such a book existed, it was never published.[17]

In the 1930's a weekly column which was called "Essays in Brief", by P.F.R., appeared in the Wednesday issues of the *Townsville Daily Bulletin* and in the *North Queensland Register*.

The essays were on a wide variety of subjects. In them Rowland imparted much of his extensive knowledge of language and literature, of places he had seen and people he had met, of events in history and countless other topics to the reading public of North Queensland. He could write on such abstract concepts as loneliness and laughter and concentration, always managing to create an interesting story or to bring in historical facts as a background for his comments. Many essays were devoted to various aspects of language. There was a series of "Every-Day Italian", "Every-Day German", "Every-Day Spanish" and others, in which he demonstrated his love of words and languages. Having studied Greek and Latin at Oxford, he was well qualified to write at length on these subjects. Other essays dealing with the topics of words and language were "The Best Language", "The Right Word", and "The Wrong Word".

Rowland strove to instil some love of art and literature in the minds of the Townsville people in the early 1930's. His main civic enthusiasm was for a North Queensland Art Gallery and Museum. He and another citizen made a house-to-house canvass of a great part of Townsville and raised enough money to buy a site, but the scheme went no further.[18] It would be interesting to know why the scheme stopped at that point, for Rowland deplored the lack of interest in cultural affairs in Townsville and was insistent in his claim that something must be done to alter this. Some people felt that he was too gifted to stay in Townsville, that he was wasted in this uncultured place. One has only to read in the

essays of the enormous pleasure he derived from going to the theatre and listening to lectures given by poets and writers when he visited England in 1939, to realize that this was probably only too true. Possibly he had few intellectual equals in Townsville in the 34 years he spent there. Few men in Queensland at the time would have had a Master of Arts degree from one of the ancient English universities. One notable exception would have been John Feetham, the Bishop of North Queensland, who had been a Cambridge scholar.

Several essays reveal Rowland's intense interest in literature, and music. "Lady Macbeth" gives us some of Rowland's ideas on Shakespeare, the writer he respected above all. In another he describes watching the opera *Tannhaüser* at the Tivoli Theatre; in "Time Revenges" he recalls being taken to see *The Mikado* for the first time in 1885: "What a perfectly heavenly evening that was", he said. He writes of the enjoyment he gained in reading the novels of Thomas Love Peacock, novels to which he had been introduced by his old headmaster John Wheatcroft, at the Rockhampton Grammar School.

When Rowland, having retired from his position as headmaster at the age of 68, returned to England for a holiday, he continued to contribute his popular essays to the Townsville newspaper. Concerned chiefly with England and with the war, these essays show Rowland at the height of his descriptive powers. He depicts the beauty and, at times, the quaintness of English towns in "Old South Wales", "Bury St Edmunds", and "Old Ipswich"; he recalls his student days in "From Oxford", "From Cambridge", and "Oxford Again After Fifty Years".

He writes of the effects of World War II on the people and on life in general in "England Waits" and "Blacked-out London". As he mentions himself, people in Australia were at least in no real danger of their lives during wartime, and he manages to convey in some of these essays something of the terror and uncertainty that plagued these people in the Mother Country. Rowland certainly chose a difficult time to make his last visit to England.

It is likely that the style of the essays suffered from their having to be written every week. This is only to be expected. For the most part, the "Essays in Brief" were interesting and entertaining, animated by Rowland's lively wit and humour. In commenting on Rowland's writings, a journalist remarked that these essays,

> . . . the popular manifestations of Rowland's gift of literary expression . . . have delighted Northern readers for years . . . and combine a sense of history with humour and understanding.[19]

A number of the essays appeared in a little volume which was first printed in 1931, entitled *The Townsville Grammar School Manual*. It contained school songs, readings, rhymes, rules and the like. A second edition appeared in 1936 with the title, *At Call-Over*.

In the preface to the first edition Rowland relates what led him to compile it. He wrote:

> Some years ago an "old boy", who had himself become a headmaster, wrote asking me for the words of one of the little discourses he had so often heard me read at Call-Over, which he wanted for a like purpose. The fact that all the horrors of the war had failed to knock these simple things out of his memory encourages me to think that more boys listen at Call-Over than one would suppose, and even that some past pupils like to possess them in print, in memory of old days.[20]

He explains what Call-Over was in the preface to the second edition:

> I have made a practice, during the 31 years of my headmastership, of reading [quotations, essays and memoranda] together with some passages of the New Testament, before school, and I believe the practice beneficial, the whole taking not more than six or seven minutes.[21]

The practice continued for years after Rowland left the school, adding a touch of formality to the ordinary school day.

Rowland divided his first edition into seven sections: Imitanda, Oranda, Legenda, Notanda, Memoranda, Cantanda and Addenda. The last section is interesting, for it contains a eulogy written by Rowland on his wife Jessie, who died on

26th September 1926[22] and, among songs and verses of Rowland's composition, a verse which is the inscription on the Memorial Clock Tower in Anzac Park at Townsville.[23]

In the second edition, Rowland rearranged the contents of the previous edition and added some new essays, prayers and songs.

The style of the little volume is simple yet profound. It contains writings on a surprising range of topics, all redolent of Rowland's intellectual but irresistibly entertaining manner. Some hundred copies of the book were sold to old boys and friends of the school, many of whom still admire and treasure this reminder of their old friend and headmaster. One of them wrote:

> His Call-Over readings and prayers continue to exert their influence, his school songs are as well-known as when he was "Boss" and just as much appreciated.[24]

Rowland had begun teaching in 1894 and from that time on had taken a more than passing interest in the education systems of the time. When he first came to Australia he joined the Teachers' Association in New South Wales and the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science. Besides the paper mentioned as an Appendix to *The New Nation*,[25] he read to these groups such papers as "Education in New Zealand", "Individualism in Education", and "The Education of the Philistine".[26]

In 1901, Rowland remarked in *The New Nation*:

> All is now ready for education. How long before the education will begin?
>
> It is primarily a matter of cost. To say that Australia cannot afford it is absurd. Cannot afford to make the most profitable of investments! Rather she cannot afford not to![27]

It was when he came to Townsville that Rowland's gift of literary expression was most often "bent to the sharp criticism of defects in the Queensland Education system."[28] Rowland said:

> In battling for existence all those years I am afraid I was not always tactful in my criticisms of our educational management from Brisbane. Thus I raised my voice in protest. . . .[29]

His chief complaint was that pupils in Brisbane had an unfair advantage over those in northern and provincial schools: examination papers seemed to be set in Brisbane specifically for Brisbane pupils and usually the bulk of scholarships granted went to Brisbane schools rather than to those in the North. With wry humour he had said, "Queenslanders require to be taught a lesson who have the impertinence to live anywhere else than Brisbane".[30] He felt that as long as Brisbane continued as the Mecca of all teachers, full justice would not be done to the whole of Queensland.[31] He was thus delighted to see, in the policy speech of Forgan Smith, the mention of provincial university colleges. Rowland had often said:

> It is little less than a disgrace that while New Zealand has practically four teaching universities, Queensland has none. And until we get our university, secondary education can never be really popular.[32]

In 1906, on hearing of the proposal to establish a university in Brisbane, he remarked:

> Too often we have seen Sydney, like some giant minotaur, claiming her annual tribute of our ablest young men and maidens. It is fully time action was taken. . . .
>
> The next step I expect to see taken . . . is the establishment of affiliated colleges at Herberton; and after perhaps at Toowoomba. A fully equipped staff would not be necessary at each place, but a system of interchanges between professors and teachers seems perfectly practicable.[33]

There is little likelihood of Rowland's dream of a university college at Herberton being realized at present, but he would be pleased to know of the James Cook University of North Queensland established at Townsville. As early as 1912 he had said, remarking on university scholarships:

> I hope the time will come when at least a hundred scholarships are allocated to the North. The expense would, of course, be enormous—at least £5,200 per annum; which would be enough, if we were not content to let the control of all our institutions be grasped by Brisbane, for us to establish a North Queensland University of our own.[34]

> It is no small thing that the people of North Queensland, without deserting the land of their adoption, for the more vulgarly luxurious societies of the south, should be afforded the means of giving their sons the entry to the professions and to the higher commercial callings. It is a greater thing still that to the children of North Queensland should be given the key whereby they may unlock the "sumless treasures" of the world's thought. Depend upon it, there is no poverty like poverty of the mind, nor any sadder sight than that of the mentally sterilized, starving amidst abundance.[35]

Rowland found North Queenslanders sceptical of schools in their own State. Too often those parents who did realize the value of secondary education sent their children away to larger, and often more inferior, schools in the south. There were those who felt that justice would not be done to North Queensland until it should be made a separate State with its own Government. A site for the residence for the Governor of North Queensland had even been selected on the Ingham Road, but the agitation for separation had come to nothing. Thus North Queensland was still virtually neglected; in 1912, at the time Rowland was writing, the North had representatives neither in the Ministry nor on the Senate of the University of Queensland.[36]

The reputation that Rowland built up for the Townsville Grammar School did much to overcome the sceptical attitude of North Queenslanders towards Townsville schools. He constantly fought to have that school recognized as equal, and even superior, to many southern schools. He succeeded in this, just as he succeeded in proving the value of higher education.

Rowland defended the North not only in matters of education: he was a champion of the North in every way. "With the spoken word and the written word, he has unremittingly defended its climate, praised its beauty, and supported its claims on the attention of State legislators. . . ."[37] In particular he was a strong advocate of the North as a place for white men to live. He conceded that the summer months, with their plagues of mosquitoes, flying ants and other insects, were almost unbearable at times, but disagreed with

the opinion that six months of the year were often uncomfortable and three almost continually uncomfortable.[38] He claimed that people fancied

> the tropics are not good to live and die in because we have seen so often in print that the London fog and its immediate surroundings are the natural habitat of the white man, and that we are somehow here by mistake, trespassing on a black man's land.[39]

He countered this with

> If the tropics are unhealthy for the white races how can we account for the fact that Queensland has a death rate not only far below that of any European country, but also below that of any other State in the Commonwealth?[40]

In attempting to make people realize this, Rowland uttered some quite biting criticism of Townsville residents, asking why people would not accept it as their home and thus make it a more appealing place in which to live.

His efforts were not in vain. Southerners visited Townsville and found that people there were healthy and happy. By 1916 at least, the old view that white people could not survive in the North had been scotched. This is one of the many debts the North owes to Percy Rowland.[41]

Rowland made a name for himself as a writer in North Queensland chiefly through his contributions to the press. He delivered many papers before various organizations in Townsville and elsewhere, each one reinforcing his reputation as scholar, critic, champion of the North and man of wide cultural and intellectual interests.

He was one of the chief participants in a monthly Literary Circle organized in Townsville in the 1930's. It was here, one old boy recalls, that he grew to appreciate Rowland's great knowledge and jovial personality.[42] He read papers to the Townsville Women's Club; "Books I've Liked Best" and "The Unchangeables" were two of these. When he retired to Brisbane in 1940 he entertained clubs and organizations with interesting accounts of his teaching career and his holiday in England. He was still contributing essays and articles to magazines and newspapers in the final years of his life. Some such articles were "The Right and the Wrong Side of the

Old School Tie", "Forty-four Years in School", and "The Dictionary Maker's Romance" which contains an unusual account of a period in the life of Dr Samuel Johnson. In all of these Rowland is his customary witty and whimsical self, delighting in telling a story. His vigorous pen was also put to the composition of several poems and songs.[43]

Percy Rowland once told his son that if he had the opportunity of living his life over again he would be a journalist. He had applied for journalistic posts after graduating from Oxford. He had then turned to teaching and made it his career. He may have attempted again in later life to enter the world of journalism, but there is no evidence of this. It is very clear that, with his command of language and his natural flair for expression, Rowland would have been just as well suited to the occupation of journalist as he was to that of teacher and headmaster. He appeared to combine the two admirably; wherever he taught, he interested himself in the local newspapers and made regular literary contributions. He never allowed his gift of literary expression to remain concealed.

As a writer Rowland had enormous potential which was possibly never fully exploited. Who can tell what degree of success he might have achieved had he become a journalist? As it was, he died at a ripe age, happy in the knowledge that he had fought a good fight for the recognition of North Queensland and for the education of its people.

Conclusion

AT an Old Boys' Dinner in Townsville Percy Rowland remarked that, as long as he lived and was able to work, his life would be devoted to the Townsville Grammar School. In the 34 years he spent there he certainly did devote his best energies to the furthering of educational opportunities at that school and at other provincial schools in Queensland.

He had the opportunity of promotions to schools in the south, but he refused to leave Townsville, for he felt he was really achieving something for education in the North.[1] He wanted the people of the North to receive their education in the North. Although it was said that in Rowland's time at the Townsville Grammar School few new developments were made, that the school progressed slowly in some ways, one cannot deny that Rowland worked harder and achieved more than perhaps any other headmaster in North Queensland in the cause of education. The examination results and scholarships that were obtained by pupils of the Townsville Grammar School testify to this. The greater part of Rowland's writings was thus concerned with education. He said:

> If anyone asks me the utility of a secondary education, I place far above its obvious utility as an entrance to the worthiest calling in the State, its utility as a guide, not to a living, but to a life.[2]

This was Rowland's aim in teaching: to build character rather than to instruct; to "awaken the individual intellect of every boy".[3]

The Reverend Hastings Rashdall, Rowland's tutor at Hertford College, Oxford, said of him:

> He is a man of the highest character, of sound judgement, and great energy, and possesses (I may add) the saving grace of a sense of humour. He has a real and unaffected zeal for education, takes a great interest in social questions, and in his views both of social and educational matters combines sympathy and enthusiasm with sobriety and common-sense.[4]

Most of those who knew Rowland or were taught by him, or who have read his works, would agree with Rashdall. His former pupils remember him chiefly for his sense of humour, his tolerance and justice, and his great humanity. Colin Bingham, the journalist, wrote a fitting tribute on Rowland's retirement from the Townsville Grammar School:

> I have always thought that when a headmaster lays aside his cap and gown, somewhere an Old Boy should lift his hat or his pen in tribute. This is all the more fitting when the cap and gown have endured service for 34 years in a land where you earn what you get, whether it be money or reputation. . . . No doubt there are some who have measured the influence of P.F.R. by the weals which on occasion he could raise on the most resistant backside. For myself I count as far more salutary the great laughter—how many headmasters can really laugh?—with which he infected the diners at the "Boss's" table, the ubiquitous football presence with which he assailed his own as well as the opposing side, and the wise words of his Call-Over addresses.[5]

In the words of John Ashe, another old boy of the Townsville Grammar School:

> As his beloved Shakespeare might have written for P. F. Rowland too:
>
> *'A was a man, take him for all in all,*
> *I shall not look upon his like again.*[6]

Appendices

Contents

1: Rowland, P. F., *The New Nation*: Chapter XI, pp. 240–246: "Secondary Education", "The Universities"

2: "Essays in Brief" by "P.F.R.": "New Year in England", "Not Very Dead"

3: Poems: "On the Memorial Clock Tower", "When Australia Wakes"

Appendix 1

Secondary Education

NONE of the Commonwealth states has, as is the case in New Zealand, an efficient system of secondary education subsidized, and indirectly controlled, by the state. On the contrary, the anarchic conditions obtaining in England are even more mischievous in Australia, where they are not modified by the existence of historic schools whose traditions keep them true to themselves, if not invariably, perhaps, to the highest interests of their country. In the Australian states there is nothing to prevent a man who has failed as an auctioneer or a pork-butcher from removing to a suitable township and conducting a second-rate secondary school, which he calls the Blankville Grammar School, if that name is as yet unappropriated, or, if it is, the Australasian College, or Commonwealth Collegiate School, Blankville. No doubt, if he is preternaturally ignorant or brutal, he will be found out in time; but at the cost of how many wasted boyhoods! If, on the other hand, his inefficiency does not sink to the point of scandal—if, too, he be sufficiently master of the "art of pay" to secure the services of assistants somewhat less incompetent, his school will probably from the business point of view succeed, while from every other point of view it will be a more disastrous failure than if it had failed. Nothing is more wanted in Australia—not even the drastic reform of the primary schools—than the appointment of a Board of Secondary Education in every state, the registration under such Boards of satisfactory teachers and duly qualified schools, and the legal prohibition of all other schools and all other teachers.

An educational quack is at least as hurtful to the body politic as is his medical confrère, and should be put down quite as rigorously in the interests of the community.

Even under the present system, or lack of system, there are not wanting in Australia several good secondary schools, some few of which receive state aid. The Sydney Grammar School, which has the reputation of being one of the best-conducted schools in Australia, receives an annual grant from the Government of New South Wales. Its staff is, to a considerable extent, composed of graduates of English universities. It affords an education similar to that of a London or Manchester day school to some six hundred boys. There are also good schools in connexion with the Anglican and Wesleyan denominations (the Church of England Grammar School and Newington College), while the King's School, Parramatta, does something to maintain the traditions of an English public school. Similarly, Victoria has its Church of England Grammar School and Scots' College, its Geelong Grammar School, etc. Queensland has several grammar schools receiving annual grants from the Government and distinguishing themselves at Sydney University examinations. Adelaide is well served; and Perth has its grammar school endowed by the state.

Good as is the work being done by these schools and some others, it is idle to deny that the existence of the inefficient private school is a menace to the secondary education of the Commonwealth.

The Universities

The six states of the Commonwealth have four universities between them, Queensland and West Australia being the only two states which are as yet without properly qualified teaching and examining bodies. These universities, especially the University of Sydney, have been well endowed by private benefactors, and are also the recipients of liberal annual grants from the state parliaments. It must be admitted by their best friends that the Australian universities have not done, and are not doing, what was expected of them. The number of students attending them is relatively small, and

they are without any considerable influence on the main currents of colonial life. The collegiate communism, which is the essential part of the English university system, leads but an attenuated existence in Australia. There are, indeed, residential colleges attached to each of the universities; but they are small, and, even so, seldom full, the majority of the students who do not live at home preferring the freer and cheaper life of the lodging-house.

The teaching staffs are, as a rule, highly competent; many of the abler English university honour-men being attracted by the high salaries and extended field of usefulness afforded by the young universities of this giant land. But it has been the ill-fortune of Australia that the professors have almost invariably been men of the quiet student type, who have confined their work rigorously to their lecture-rooms, and have failed to see that the successful university professor in a youthful democratic country must be something of a demagogue, and do something to justify the ways of universities to men in the street. We want an occasional Sir George Grey on the staffs of our colonial colleges; some professor who, while not neglecting the duties of the lecture-room and the examination-hall, will yet be able to catch and hold the ear of the public, and make the university felt as a living factor in the common life.

Nothing could be further from the intention of the writer than to decry the Australian universities. On the contrary, all honour to these young communities, inasmuch as in their struggle for material wealth they have spared time and money to devise and to endow halls of learning not in some respects unworthy of comparison with the storied quadrangles of older lands. If they did no more than "mark time", the Australian universities would yet be doing something for the future of education in the Commonwealth. They are doing much more than mark time; they are all of them carrying on useful instructional work, and turning out annually increasing numbers of intelligent students, competent to take a worthy part in the organized existence of the state.

But the warmest admiration for the quality of the work done, in the face of many difficulties, by the universities of

the Commonwealth, is quite compatible with grave regret that their sphere of influence is not more extended; and especially that they are not brought directly into touch with the public primary schools, both by educating, without exception, all those who are to teach at those schools; and by opening their doors to every primary school pupil (after a free secondary school course), from whose full development the community is likely to benefit.

Appendix 2

New Year in England

THE New Year has brought bright frosty weather. The country in the home counties is thinly veiled with snow. The roads are hard with frost. There is little vegetation now. The blackberry bushes in the hedges still retain a straggling foliage of dull green. The grass, partly covered with snow, has lost its brightness. Chrysanthemums are brown ghosts of their former beauty. But the oaks and elms are scarcely less lovely in the nude than when clad in all their summer finery; the poplars—not the straight, but the branching variety—display their extreme delicacy of branch and twig. A walk to and from the village at sunset made me remember the beauty of misty hills and valleys, and the charm of the gradual English sunset glow, no radiant transfiguration like the Queensland one, but equally beautiful in its quiet way; the orange of the horizon fades into pale yellow, the pale yellow into cool gray-blue. And there is the evening star, already preluding night.

New Year's Day, less observed in England than in Australia, brings to a close the Christmas festivities, festivities very quietly celebrated this year, under the shadow of war. At the theatres and variety halls it is difficult to raise a laugh. People find it hard to be merry, standing, as we all are, on the brink of a dreadful future—dreadful even if, as we all expect, the ultimate victory is ours.

Englishmen have been cheered by invaluable help from the Dominions and by the loyal messages of Empire statesmen. Mr Menzies' inspiring address came over admirably. Mr Curtin's message made an excellent impression. Mr Fairbairn's caution against thinking that Hitlerism would "crack" unless we applied our maximum pressure was a timely warning against excessive optimism.

Such optimism can only be felt by the young and thoughtless. It is not felt by the army or navy. It is not felt by the soldiers in training. Their typical attitude is that they have been called up to do a distasteful but necessary job. They realize its necessity, and will not spare themselves in carrying it through. But the glamour of fighting went in the early years of the last war. Under modern conditions what Homer called "the joy of battle" simply does not exist.

No German lies are less based on truth than those depicting England as a land of a few rich people forcing the proletariat to fight. The whole people of the Empire, rich and poor, are united in their stand for freedom and decency.

The following lines, published the other day in a leading English journal, signed "Americanus", ring with a chastened Kiplingism that seems to me wonderfully impressive:

Not since Hellenic hills and rivers surged
Against the limbs of stout Pheidippides,
Has any Marathon more nobly urged,
Than calls the snows and the Antipodes
To rendezvous by sea and land and sky—
Not weighing in the scale how far the cry—
Where she who suckled them to nationhood
Stands stedfast forth amid her lion's brood;
A league of free men, fettered by no laws,
No sanctions save allegiance to a cause.

Not Very Dead

I OFTEN wonder how anyone can think of Latin as a dead language. It is the living stuff of which half our chief languages are formed. The language of the Romans never died. By the Romans who spoke it in Italy, it was in due course modified into Italian; by those who spoke it in Spain and France, it was gradually modified into Spanish and French. He that would be versed in those languages, in learning Latin, has a common basis from which he can work.

With English it is different. Half our words and much of our grammar we derive from our German ancestors, who invaded Britain in 449, and after. But the Norman invasion of 1066 forced these same Anglo-Germans to accept from William the Conqueror's men the Latin modified by years, which the Britons had refused to accept from Julius Caesar and his followers. And since 1400 our tongue has been a fifty-fifty blend of German and Latin elements.

Those old Romans take a deal of killing. In fact, as far as can be foreseen they will never die. The roads they made in Boadicea's time are used today, retopped for modern motor cars. The laws they made are still, to a large extent, the laws of the civilized world. The language in which Virgil clothed "the stateliest measure ever moulded by the lips of man" still echoes in every Roman church throughout the world. No more is Rome the "Eternal City" than is Latin the Eternal Language. It has been made the basis of education for hundreds of years by every civilized people. It is only recently the modern world with its "sick hurry, its divided aims" has begun to doubt whether there is time for it, in its race to get education, like everything else, done in record time. Parents demand instead, even at thirteen, the typewriter for their children. As if there was not time to learn that convenient machine at fifteen, when their scanty allowance of education is at an end!

It seems to be Queensland that takes the lead in trying to convince itself that the typewriter is alive and Latin dead. England and America, Germany and France still realize that Latin lives, and Latin still retains an honoured place in the curriculum of all their higher schools. In Victoria and New South Wales, most pupils learn it who aspire to anything beyond primary and technical studies.

While Latin is still taught in our schools, pupils grow up to regard words as living things, not tokens of mumbo-jumbo. Words like "convention", "pervade", "reciprocity" are mere jargon unless the key of Latin automatically unlocks their meanings. Latin makes us free of huge companies of related words, and is thus an invaluable aid to clear thinking and

correct expression. Have there indeed, ever been great writers of English, whose English has not been based on knowledge of at least the Latin elements?

English grammar and constructions are simplicity itself. It is in many ways, as has been emphasized in these Essays, incomparably "the best language". But those use it best who have sufficient knowledge of Latin to correct its looseness, and realize the principles that underlie the grammar of all languages. Those use it best who can combine the facility and grace and convenience of the English sentence, with the sincerity, conciseness and restraint that are the priceless endowment of the Latin tongue.

Latin cannot die, so long as the correct and intelligent use of words is regarded as an essential part of education. Do we really want to train our children from childhood to become transferable typewriter attachments, scarcely more intelligent than the machines they manipulate? In Queensland, Latin and other cultural subjects may seem to be dying, trampled under the metallic taps of millions of mechanical writing and counting machines. But the world is wide. And even in Queensland a day may dawn of saner educational ideals. *So mote it be!*

Appendix 3

On the Memorial Clock Tower

The moments pass, but ne'er shall die
  The memory of our honoured Dead,
  Who marching whither Duty led
With Death met Immortality.

The names of those who paid the price
  For us and for the land we love,
  Be beacon-fires to all who move
On lowlier ways of sacrifice!

When Australia Wakes

When Australia smiles,
When the setting sun beguiles
In a sweet transfiguration
Bush and shanty, plain and station,
And the mountains' dim defiles,
Is there any fairer Nation
    When Australia smiles?

When Australia sleeps,
When the moon's own mercy steeps
All the city's uglinesses
In her glamour-soft caresses,
How the splendour creeps
O'er the gum-spread wildernesses
    When Australia sleeps!

And what shall be the glory
    When Australia wakes?
Outdone the old world's story,
    When the new morn breaks!
With eyes worn true with weeping
We watch the white dawn peeping;
Oh, who would then be sleeping
    When Australia wakes?

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Percy Fritz Rowland

PERCY FRITZ ROWLAND (1870–1945), headmaster of Townsville Grammar School from 1905 to 1938, was by any measure a remarkable man. Earning his way by scholarships and bursaries, rare in his day, he took Final Honours in Classics (*Literae Humaniores*) at Oxford in 1893. Undecided whether to enter journalism or education, he preferred the former but fell into the latter. After pursuing his calling as a schoolmaster in Ireland, England, New Zealand, and New South Wales—where he wrote one of the earliest books on the federation of the Australian colonies—he came to Queensland as Second Master at the Rockhampton Grammar School.

Rowland took up the herculean task of building up the Townsville Grammar School after the devastation of Cyclone Leonta. With his wife he struggled through years of challenge and hardship, never losing his faith in the future of North Queensland and making time to write scintillating articles and humorous sketches. That he succeeded is manifest in the men and women who went ahead to build useful and in some cases notable careers on the foundation he laid. The traditions which he established are still vital in the school which he built. This brief life, written by Anne McKay in partial fulfilment of the B.A. (Hons) degree requirements in 1972, is a slight tribute to a man who bravely carried the torch of culture in North Queensland for a generation.