

## PUBLISHING PRACTICE AND POETIC REPUTATION: THE CASE OF HENRY KENDALL

THE DOMINANT ASSUMPTIONS OF AN AGE, changes of taste and shifting perceptions of national identity have all contributed to the sharp fluctuations which are such a feature of the reception of many Australian, colonial poets. The verse of Charles Harpur, Adam Lindsay Gordon and Henry Lawson, to name but three notable examples, has enjoyed a brief season of applause, followed by a gradual descent into the literary limbo of the largely unresearched and seldom read. Similarly, the lot of female poets has been equally extreme if less well documented. Who today has read Emma Anderson, Emily Manning or Jennings Carmichael, of whom it was said that she 'now steps into the breach [left by Gordon and Kendall] and proves to us that the line of Colonial poets is by no means ended'?<sup>1</sup> Or who knows that Catherine Martin began her distinguished career as a writer with a compilation of verse entitled *The Explorers and Other Poems*, which would stand comparison with most mid-Victorian volumes of poetry? But whereas their slide from contemporaneous recognition towards neglect and obscurity passed apparently without arousing a murmur of critical protest, Henry Kendall's collected verse had raised him to the eminence of Australia's finest poet, so that his subsequent fall to the status of a minor colonial author excited considerable controversy. The beauty of his nature depictions, the music of his poetry, as well as his hard personal struggle, were all foregrounded in his defence, but to no avail. Indeed, so hopeless appeared the task of the post-war apologists that Barry Oakley, with accuracy and propriety, made it the subject of broad farce in *Scanlan*, where he allowed a bumbling Australianist to reveal his own inadequacies, and those of his chosen subject matter, through an inconclusive and partisan lecture on Henry Kendall. Yet the poet's case is more complicated than these rearguard actions have suggested. For they have aimed primarily to buttress established views of Kendall, little realizing that these are demonstrably the product of the author's ongoing endeavour to manipulate publishing practices to his own ends: an attempt which resulted initially in consolidating his poetic reputation, but finished arguably by impoverishing and distorting our understanding of one of Australia's founding literary figures.

Kendall's situation as a writer was broadly representative of that faced by other colonial poets in the second half of the nineteenth century. Overseas recognition was still a much desired goal, and the youthful author would humbly submit selected poems to *The Athenaeum* in the early 1860s; but local conditions were also changing momentously. Demographic growth, as a result of the goldrushes, had produced a vastly expanded readership. New periodicals came into being to meet the demand, as with the establishment in 1865 of *The Australian Journal* and *The Australian Monthly Magazine* (later renamed *The Colonial Monthly*), leading to a diversification of local outlets for verse, while at the same time the colonies developed into an important market for English publications. Literary journalism now emerged as a viable career, with limited remuneration being available for critical and some poetical contributions to newspapers of the day. These provided the sole outlet for Kendall's prose, and accepted a considerable diversity of his verse, ranging from love and nature depictions through to responses to contemporary issues such as the Catholic vote in Victoria, or the abuse of parliamentary privilege in New South

Wales.<sup>2</sup> But if Kendall was, as he boasted to Charles Harpur,<sup>3</sup> virtually certain of placing individual poems in the press, he would have freely conceded that local conditions were far less propitious for collections of indigenous verse. With only minimal overseas interest in Australian poetry, and the home literary market dominated by cheap and renowned English imports, colonial poets prior to the 1890s had generally to cover the costs of printing themselves, or by subscription.<sup>4</sup> Both *Poems and Songs* and *Songs from the Mountains*, Kendall's first and last collections, were financed by the latter method, whereas *Leaves from Australian Forests* generated a loss of ninety pounds for its publisher, George Robertson, who had agreed to meet production expenses in return for all receipts from the first 700 copies sold. Henry Kendall, in later aiming consciously at a wider readership for *Songs from the Mountains*, was therefore acting advisedly. Similarly, his conclusions on the adverse effects of an acquisitive and, in part, illiterate society on the development of local literature were informed by actual experience:

in short . . . there is not the ghost of a chance for a writer attempting to get his living by offering to the public work not lying within the domains of journalism. So it comes to pass that those who happen to be lucky enough, and who possess the necessary aptitude, join the Press, and in due time forget their early aspirations and become plodding, satisfied newspaper hacks. The men who are not so fortunate — God help them!<sup>5</sup>

Poetry, then, could be expected to contribute little towards defraying the costs of a growing family, although its publication in book or booklet form still remained a desirable object, despite market uncertainties and prospects of individual financial loss.

Volumes of verse were obviously attractive because they afforded greater accessibility and potential durability to a poet's work, but these very advantages also posed special problems. In essence, occasional publication in the local press offered scope for greater thematic liberties. There the transitory nature of the medium, coupled with the peripheral interest of verse to its readership, assured that unorthodox or potentially disquieting views aroused comparatively little attention, as did their utterance in different contexts or at disparate times. On the other hand, selection of an individual piece for a place in a collection, although greatly enhancing the chances of its survival before the reading public, exposed it to prolonged scrutiny and critical review, and placed at issue the author's current and future standing. Kendall, moreover, was well aware of these diverse possibilities, and his private circumstances made such considerations particularly critical. In correspondence he would lament, for instance, the virtual loss of much of his best prose in ephemeral periodicals of the day. Also, as we shall see, he used the occasion provided by his books of verse to condemn or to save, for personal as well as for aesthetic reasons, individual poems from a similar archival grave, thereby enabling us to watch at first hand a writer interceding actively in the fabrication of his own poetic reputation.

The two crucial periods of authorial intervention and self-imaging are focused by his later collections, *Leaves from Australian Forests* (1869) and *Songs from the Mountains* (1880). For each of these works, Kendall had the fruits of the best part

of a decade of creative endeavours to draw on and choose from, whereas *Poems and Songs* of 1862 postdated by only three years his earliest known contributions to the local press with 'Oh, Tell Me, Ye Breezes' on 26 February to *The Australian Home Companion and Band of Hope Journal* and 'Lines suggested by the Death of L.M. Lavenu' to *The Empire* on 5 April 1859. The very limited body of work available for inclusion in this first volume rendered the process of selection relatively predictable. With one exception, all the material brought together here appeared initially in 1861 or in 1862.<sup>6</sup> The vast majority of omitted works are earlier productions which were seemingly judged, either by Kendall or by his mentors,<sup>7</sup> to be thematically repetitive and less indicative of an emerging individual voice than his more recent works. Hence earlier treatments of 'islander' themes like 'The Cannacha's Death Song over his Chieftain' and the rambling 'Legend of Tanna,' from respectively March and July 1860, yield to the more compact 'Ballad of Tanna,' much as derivative poems dealing with such stock themes as the perils of the sea, love and mutability are passed over in favour of later variations on similar matter. By 1869, however, the unknown youth had become an established public figure, who would assume full responsibility for subsequent compilations. A frequent butt of polemical attacks in the *Sydney Punch*, his work had also attracted high praise from the visiting literary lion, R.H. Horne, who, in awarding to Kendall's anonymous contributions the poetry prize offered by the *Australian Annual* in 1868, wrote:

'Arakoon' is evidently one who has made Poetry and Poetic Art, both in reading and in writing, the ruling passion of his life. Such poems as 'A Death in the Bush' are produced by no other means, and by no other men; never have been, and never will be . . . I consider them as poems worthy of comparison with some of the finest parts of Wordsworth's 'Excursion.'<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, the appearance of *Leaves from Australian Forests* in early October 1869 coincided with, and was apparently meant to underpin, its author's desperate attempt to achieve economic and personal independence in Melbourne as a professional man of letters. By contrast, the 1880 collection is not linked with an endeavour to live by the pen, though here acknowledged notoriety and private failures constituted a new and heavy burden. In response to these changing circumstances, distinct patterns of omission and emphasis emerge in each collection which must now be examined in detail, as these would be repeated in posthumous editions of Kendall's verse, long after the reasons motivating his original choices had lost most if not all of their force.

The publication of *Leaves from Australian Forests* came at a period of intense crisis, and needs to be seen against the background provided both by this and by Kendall's rapid poetic and intellectual development during the preceding years. The literary apprenticeship, undertaken in 1862 under the guidance of James Lionel Michael in Grafton and attested to by the publication of the fledgling *Poems and Songs*, had ended by the mid-1860s with the conscious adoption of a difficult ideal of poetic calling — a focusing of resolve inspired and reinforced, at least in part, by the example of Charles Harpur. In poems of 1863 such as 'Lines to J.L. Michael' and 'To Charles Harpur,' Kendall still depicted himself as an acolyte ('For my thoughts, this morning, / Were yours yesterday,' p.284).<sup>9</sup> But by 1864 his new-found and

dominant theme had become the need for spiritual leadership in an age wracked by doubt, in such poems as 'Eighteen Hundred and Sixty Four,' 'Woollie Creek,' 'Elijah' and 'To Henry Halloran.'<sup>10</sup> Moreover, in contemporaneous correspondence to Mrs A.E. Selwyn he projected poetry as a potential, secular source of faith, describing it as 'a voice of Divinity almost *human*' (C.60), or more categorically as 'a revelation of Divinity beyond all revelations: a religion past religion' (C.77). These pronouncements, read alongside his verse of the time and his frequent allusions to a personal mission, assume a clearly admonitory dimension. Yet the prophet-elect was handicapped in fulfilling his task by crippling monetary and family problems and, as an indirect consequence, was severely buffeted by a series of stinging broadsides fired at him by 'Mr. Punch.'<sup>11</sup> For Kendall, faced by mounting debts and heavy responsibilities, had sought preferment and financial assistance from figures who were both public servants and poets, such as Henry Halloran and Henry Parkes. *Punch*, attracted by the spectre of cronyism, ruthlessly satirized the imagined antics of the 'three Henrys.' There, too, Kendall's work as a whole was ridiculed as self-indulgent 'rhyming nonsense' and 'mystical rigmarole,' as on 3 June and 15 July 1865, chiefly because of its confessional tone and its repeated concern with insubstantial or metaphysical issues. The poet responded with a bitter, unsigned counterblast against 'the Puny Pusters of Punch' in 'The Bronze Trumpet' (1866), and arguably with a crucial shift from works which suggest direct, personal expression to distanced reworkings of general dilemmas, beginning with Australian material and later focusing increasingly on Old World matter.<sup>12</sup> Overt grappling with the predicament of religious doubt in poems of 1864 gave way to its dramatization in ambitious narrative poems of 1865, such as the competition-winning 'A Death in the Bush' and 'The Glen of Arrawatta.' These contemporaneous settings, in turn, yielded to an unprecedented spate of classical and biblical adaptations, stretching from 'The Voyage of Telegonus' (June 1866) and 'Merope' (November 1866), through 'Syrinx' (November 1868), to 'King Saul at Gilboa' (January), 'Ogyges' (April), 'Galatea' (April), 'Daphne' (August) and 'To Damascus' (October), all first published in 1869. Here, as subsequent commentary has amply demonstrated, Kendall achieved a different and even more complete form of anonymity than in 'The Bronze Trumpet.'<sup>13</sup> For the ordered and dispassionate narrative drive of these works, coupled with their seemingly straightforward refashioning of received matter, answered charges of excessive subjectivity, and served to forestall the loose and defamatory, biographical speculation generated by some of his earlier poems.

Feeding into these ostensibly more detached productions were acutely felt private dilemmas, which would also shape his 1869 collection. In particular, the poems of classical and biblical provenance, published first between June 1866 and April 1869, mediate a dark and increasingly pessimistic vision of creation, charting obliquely a growing sense of insoluble impasse which would make flight from Sydney seem to Kendall his sole remaining option.<sup>14</sup> Tales of metamorphosis recur in works such as 'Merope,' 'Syrinx' and 'Galatea,' with implications of cruelly arrested development, enclosure and arbitrary destiny, germane to their author's concerns. The transformation of other personae, though often figurative, is equally

engulfing, irreparable and fatal to individual aspirations. Telegonus undergoes a kind of life-in-death, being transformed from a bold actor into a helpless, musing spectator 'with fastened mouth' (p.97), alienated from sustaining social and religious rites. Similarly Saul, despite his genuine repentance and desire to make amends, is unrelentingly crushed for the error of 'vengeance stayed at Amalek' (p.107), while the rock- and tree-like form of Ogyges from April 1869, victim of both longevity and mutability, provides intimations of cumulative authorial frustration, born of years of unavailing effort, which would lead in the same month to Kendall's resignation from the New South Wales Civil Service.<sup>15</sup> Determined to stake all on his one remaining resource, literary talent, the poet had now to put prospects of silence and impotence behind him in the southern metropolis. Direct evidence of this resolution comes with an abrupt movement away from tragic portrayals to accounts of individual salvation, based on classical and biblical materials, in 'Daphne' (August) and 'To Damascus' (October 1869). There notions of beneficent divinity replace prior depictions of inexplicable doom, while the Pauline prototype of sudden conversion from sinful zeal in a false cause to being God's chosen spokesman provides, as the ensuing volume of poetry would do, a means of re-envisioning past trials and self-undermining speculation within a predominantly redemptive framework.

The decision to assume the mantle of a professional writer, linked with the desire to 'think for the many, and fight for the mass' ('To Damascus,' p.83), achieved enduring expression in *Leaves from Australian Forests*. A major criterion for the inclusion of a piece in this volume, published in Melbourne, was apparently its putative impact on the author's new literary milieu. This at least is the impression given by the aesthetically indefensible omission of certain works containing explicit, and sometimes unqualified, indices of religious doubt. Most notably, the powerful poetic testimonies to wavering faith from 1864 were reissued neither in this work nor at any subsequent time in the poet's life. This represents a marked departure from his usual practice and amounted, in effect, to their suppression, by a writer who acknowledged his own 'super sensitiveness' (C.164), and the wish not to contaminate others through his faltering example:

And we who taste the core of many tales  
Of tribulation — we whose lives are salt  
With tears indeed — we therefore hide our eyes  
And weep in secret lest our grief should risk  
The rest that hath no hurt from daily racks  
Of fiery clouds and immemorial rains. (p.121)<sup>16</sup>

A similar fate met rare, ensuing expressions of spiritual malaise, such as the fine eulogy 'In Memoriam: Archdeacon McEnroe' (August 1868), where Abdiel-like steadfastness is contrasted with the longing, uncertainty-plagued 'we who sigh like seaside reeds' (p.353). Dramatizations of existential dilemmas, however, were correctly judged to be sufficiently veiled and distanced to escape notice, except as colonial poetic essays after international accreditation, and so were included, interleaved in a seemingly artless fashion among miscellaneous celebrations of nature, the vicissitudes of love, and poetic evocations of diverse moods. The final

product of these careful decisions was a book which, in another literary clime, might well have helped Kendall's cause. For it attested to both creative range and individual belief by moving confidently between Old and New World material, and by reiterating overtly, not metaphysical and private anxieties, but reassuring promises of consolation to the worldly-weary in faith-inspired landscape depictions, such as 'Araluen' and 'Illa Creek,' with their revelation of a 'divinity, which lies/ Ever at the heart of things' (p.75).

Between *Leaves from Australian Forests* and his final collection fell 'the shadow of 1872,' and with it the need for personal as well as poetic rehabilitation. Melbourne proved to be a 'gloomy flinty hearted city' to the hard-pressed literary aspirant. His 1869 collection of verse was favourably reviewed but failed financially, as did his endeavour to eke out a living by literary journalism. On top of these setbacks came the death of his only child, Araluen, growing estrangement from his wife, and alcoholic addiction. They all contributed to an overwhelming sense of failure, guilt and degradation, leading to works marred by self-pity and *mauvaise foi*, like 'Basil Moss' and 'Manasseh' — a dire predicament encapsulated years later in 'On a Street.' The nadir was reached after his return to Sydney late in 1870 with periodic derangement and physical collapse, climaxing in admission for treatment to the Gladesville Mental Asylum in 1871 and 1873.<sup>17</sup> Recovery, however, and regained self-mastery would come only at the hands of the Fagan family of Gosford, followed by a gradual resumption of contact with the wider world of letters in the late 1870s. The process of social reintegration was effectively completed in 1876, when he was rejoined by his wife and family at the new timber outlet which he was to manage for the Fagans at Camden Haven. But confirmation of regained literary standing, although aided by occasional newspaper publications and the award in 1879 of a prize for a poem on the Sydney International Exhibition, was only fully assured with the critical and public success of *Songs from the Mountains*, while authorial confidence probably never recovered from the harrowing events leading up to 'the shadow of 1872.' As late as 10 February 1880 he could write to Nathaniel Swan, his most confidential correspondent during the closing years of his life, that 'I have not the confidence in myself that you expect me to have. Men of my stamp never possess it. An adverse criticism makes me cast aside for ever the thing criticised'<sup>18</sup> — a mental state which further intensified the need to ensure a favourable reception for his last collection.

These personal motives, together with the realization that his present and prospective reputation would depend in large measure on his final volume of verse, meant that Kendall lavished considerable efforts and thought upon it. We know, for instance, that he copied the works meant for inclusion by hand and oversaw the proofs forwarded to him at Camden Haven. He also personally guaranteed the initial printing cost of one hundred pounds, and paid for the volume's subsequent reissue when 'Christmas Creek' was substituted for 'The Song of Ninian Melville.' This represented a substantial commitment to a man of straitened financial circumstances, whose waking hours were overburdened with business and family matters. In addition it meant, as he lamented to close correspondents, that he was obliged to appeal to a broad range of tastes in choosing the contents, to cater even to the likes

of 'Tom, Jack and Harry . . . with a view to the recovery of my outlay' (C.389), as he cavilled to G.G. McCrae on 2 October 1880. But his deepest level of personal engagement, indicated as before by his inclusions and omissions, has aroused little comment.<sup>19</sup> For apart from the wish to secure an enlarged readership, the process of selection seems to have been influenced again by his unrealized dream of creating admonitory verse of national import. Private images of aborted hopes, transparently veiled in the case of 'At Nightfall' and overt in 'On a Street,' are excluded, as is the moving expression of his generation's doomed poetic mission in 'The Late Mr. A.L. Gordon: In Memoriam.' These have no place in a volume whose main thrust is to affirm the possible fulfilment of that very quest or calling in which the author himself failed, by celebrating how others have succeeded in spite of apparent handicaps or adversity. Throughout a balance is maintained between avowals of personal shortcomings and exempla of inspired human achievement, stretching from mythic prehistory to the colonial present in 'Pytheas,' 'Hy-Brasil,' 'On a Spanish Cathedral' and 'Leichardt.' From the outset, the keynotes of conciliation and compensation are struck in 'Dedication to a Mountain,' where individual lapses are acknowledged and transcended through his paean to sublime nature. Thereafter the weak instrument is repeatedly chided but the existence of beatific sources is never seriously called into question, as witnessed in 'Mooni,' 'Narrara Creek' and 'Orara.' Overall the collection commands respect through its prosodic virtuosity, invokes compassion and, perhaps most importantly from Kendall's point of view, confirms higher goals worthy of individual endeavour. Moreover, apart from 'The Song of Ninian Melville,' the poet avoided potentially contentious works, and selected satires of limited impact, such as 'Billy Vicars' and 'A Hyde Park Larrikan,' or distasteful but popular caricatures of the indigenous inhabitants in 'Black Lizzie' and 'Peter the Piccaninny.' More general critiques of national failings and intellectual limitations like 'An Innings with Innes' and 'The Gaggling Bill,' together with other trenchant pieces often published under pseudonyms, were silently passed over and condemned to oblivion among the back numbers of *The Freeman's Journal* — sacrificed to a collection which made peace with his times, and whose broad appeal assured him of a foremost place among Australian poets.

A fascinating coda to this story of the author's concerned nurturing of a public, poetic image is provided by the publishing history of 'Galatea.' First printed in the *Argus* sixteen days after he relinquished his government position in 1869, this poem alone of his recent Old World adaptations was not included in *Leaves from Australian Forests*, though it appeared a decade later in *Songs from the Mountains*. This postponement, moreover, seems to have had little to do with its perceived artistic merit, because in the interim 'Galatea' was published twice in local newspapers. Nor can it be convincingly argued that its inclusion in the 1869 collection would have led to an undue preponderance of works based on classical material. Rather the reason for its temporary exclusion lies arguably in the veiled but highly personal nature of the depiction, and the attendant risk of exposing secret dreads which the poet was in the very act of stifling. The original story, as transmitted by Ovid, focuses on violent passion and thwarted love. Its climax comes when the nymph Galatea, lying in the arms of young and handsome Acis, is suddenly dis-

turbed by the musically accompanied addresses of the hideous Cyclops. These detail the material gifts by which he hopes to gain her: offering for beauty, in essence, a natural bounty of which his own attributes partake. His suit, however, is spurned, leading him to slay the successful paramour with a huge rock. Kendall's version deftly transforms the rivalry of love into a paradigm of the unavailing efforts of poetry's disciples to attain their goals in the here and now. Acis is now depicted as a type of the supreme artist, whose reed-flute keeps pace with and leads to the fulfilment of his passion ('Then he who shaped the cunning tune, by keen desire made bolder, / Fell fainting, like a fervent moon, upon the sea-nymph's shoulder,' p.219). Galatea, like so many of the author's distant goddesses, embodies an ideal so fabulous as to defy and yet demand attainment ('the heart fell dead without her') — a reading confirmed by the fate of Acis, which shows consummation to issue in, or even be synonymous with, death. Finally, the uncouth Cyclops emerges as an archetypal, Kendall poet-figure or even as an authorial surrogate. For the lengthy, elaborate song of proposal, which in Ovid rests happily within a corporeally bounded realm, is replaced by a singer pursuing the uncatchable and the inexpressible, but doomed to failure by his physical limitations,

'Ah, Galatê,' said Polypheme, 'I would that I could find thee  
Some finest tone of hill or stream, wherewith to lull and bind thee!  
'What lyre is left of marvellous range, whose subtle strings, containing  
Some note supreme, might catch and change, or set thy passion waning? —  
(p.220)

Furthermore, earlier tell-tale similes describing the maid, like 'Hair balmy as the blossoming South' (p.219), identified 'Galatea' before final revision with a specifically colonial muse and local predicament. These underline links between the Cyclops' deformity and failings and a putative crisis in authorial confidence, generated by a wide gamut of creative trials, private reverses and spiritual uncertainties, which threatened to render null and void his lofty aspirations. Henry Kendall, having already witnessed the bitter close to the careers of James Lionel Michael, Charles Harpur and Daniel Deniehy, would now try desperately to avoid a similar fate. In a work such as *Leaves from Australian Forests*, which was to have ensured him an eminent place in Melbourne literary circles, 'Galatea's' revelations of black despair, and of the feared crushing of creative impulse, would clearly have been ill-advised. Years later, however, the poem could be included in *Songs from the Mountains*, where, read out of context, it aroused neither interest nor biographical speculation about a writer who now openly acknowledged the failure of his professed mission, before a contemporary version of the Cyclops' 'stone of death' (p.219).

Posthumous editions of his poetry prior to the Second World War did little to alter or otherwise qualify the dominant conception of the poet established by his last two collections. Instead, they offered a steadily expanding vision of a clearly defined and well-received corpus of works, which both assured Kendall's high standing amongst local poets, and laid the foundation for the later impasse satirized in *Scanlan*. In 1886, four years after the author's death, Alexander Sutherland brought out a substantial volume of 101 works with the aid of his widow, entitled

*Poems of Henry Kendall.* All but two of these were drawn from *Leaves from Australian Forests* and *Songs from the Mountains*. Subsequent major editions of 1890 and 1903, supervised respectively by Sutherland and by the poet's son, Frederick Clarence Kendall, gradually increased the number of works, but left the major emphases unchanged. The culmination of these tendencies came in Bertram Stevens' *The Poems of Henry Kendall* from 1920 with 223 pieces (224 in revised editions), which represented the high-water mark of early scholarly and reader interest in Kendall. It brought together his three collections, plus fifty-four previously uncollected works. The main area of omission remained the poet's satirical and topical verse, much of it published under pen-names or available only in manuscript, while this collection completed the work of its predecessors in unwittingly enshrining a carefully censored image of Kendall's prosodic range, which had proved congenial to the late Victorians.

Despite certain notable efforts, postwar scholarship has failed to shift attention to neglected aspects of his *oeuvre*, or to reveal what Frank Myers termed 'The Other Kendall.'<sup>20</sup> Evidence of a robust, engaged author emerged in T. Inglis Moore's edition of *Selected Poems of Henry Kendall* (1957), which contained a significant section devoted to political verse entitled 'The Irishman's Pig.' Also *Henry Kendall* edited by A.D. Hope and Leonie Kramer (1973) focused on the satirical and topical aspects of his verse and prose. But neither of these works brought a substantial change to the public image of the plaintive, sin-wracked poet, nor altered the now generally accepted view that he was, in fact, only a minor colonial author, remarkable chiefly for melancholy and mellifluous evocations of the New South Wales coastal hinterland, in pieces such as 'Bell Birds' and 'Illa Creek.' Thus the consequences of publishing decisions, which effectively concealed links between his best verse and the predicament of local letters ('The men set out to work the ends of Fate / Which fill the world with tales of many tears,' 'The Voyage of Telegonus,' p.95), have been unforeseeable and long lasting. For Kendall, by allowing the polemically and professionally oriented, as well as the unconventional, aspects of his response to disappear from sight, unintentionally contributed to the current verdict that his work, as a whole, lacks substantial content and wider relevance. Apparent marginality, in turn, has bred neglect. Hence there is as yet no complete edition of either his poetry or his prose.<sup>21</sup> Nor is there a comprehensive modern biography, while the impoverished offering of essential resources fosters distorted and diminished accounts of his achievement.<sup>22</sup> Finally, a general lack of reader and scholarly interest in the author is amply demonstrated by the decision to exclude him from two forthcoming monograph series on Australian writers, to be published by the University of Queensland Press and Oxford University Press. The poet's position remains then, in many respects, still sadly representative of that of many of his peers, though the potential centrality of his life and works to our understanding of late nineteenth-century colonial culture provides grounds for hoping that his fall from critical grace may not be final.

Michael Ackland,  
Monash University.

## NOTES

1. J.F. Hogan in his Preface to Jennings Carmichael, *Poems* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1895), p.vi.
2. See respectively 'The Irishman's Pig' and 'The Gaggling Bill,' reprinted with explanatory notes in T. Inglis Moore, ed., *Selected Poems of Henry Kendall* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1957), pp.163-65 and 172-76.
3. See, for instance, his letter of 3 November 1863 to Harpur, where he wrote: 'Any thing you may wish to see in print, I will gladly insert in the *Herald* for you,' reprinted in Donovan Clarke's unpublished M.A. dissertation, 'A Critical Edition of the Letters of Henry Kendall' (Sydney University, 1959), p.43. Subsequent quotations from correspondence will be accompanied by a parenthetical page reference to this thesis, prefixed by C.
4. See Ken Stewart, 'Journalism and the World of the Writer: the Production of Australian Literature 1855-1915,' in Laurie Hergenhan, ed., *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (Ringwood: Penguin Books, 1988), pp.179-83.
5. From 'Men of Letters in New South Wales,' *Punch Staff Papers*, 1872, reprinted in A.D. Hope and Leonie Kramer, ed., *Henry Kendall* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1973), pp.122-23.
6. Dating of first and subsequent publications is based on information provided in T.T. Reed, ed., *The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall* (Adelaide: Libraries Board of South Australia, 1966).
7. In a public advertisement J. Sheridan Moore went on record as having 'consented to superintend the publication' (*The Empire*, 21 January 1861), and T.T. Reed suggests plausibly that he and James Lionel Michael 'had some voice . . . in selecting the contents of the book' (*The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall*, p.xxv).
8. Reprinted in T.T. Reed, ed., *The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall*, p.xlii.
9. Quotations from poems of Kendall are accompanied by a page reference to T.T. Reed, ed., *The Poetical Works of Henry Kendall*.
10. For further discussion of Kendall's religious crisis and its bearing on his poetry see Michael Ackland, 'Towards 'The Shadow': Henry Kendall and the mid-century Crisis of Faith,' *Westerly*, 35 (1990): 71-78.
11. For a comprehensive list of works in *Punch* referring to Kendall see Ian F. McLaren, *Henry Kendall: A Comprehensive Bibliography* (Parkville: University of Melbourne Library, 1987), pp.148-51.
12. Other factors, of course, played a part in this shift, such as his need, as an acutely dependent government employee, to avoid the potential for controversy inherent in overt expressions of spiritual malaise, or the desire to work through, or otherwise give veiled utterance to, pressing private dilemmas as a precondition for assuming a more public, prophetic stance.
13. The general approach of scholarship has been to propose a virtual hiatus between personal and poetic concerns in the case of these Old World adaptations, summed up by Vivian Smith in the Poetry section of Leonie Kramer, ed., *The Oxford History of Australian Literature* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1981): 'The need to interpret an old story, yet to keep close to fact, seems to have had a salutary, disciplinary effect on Kendall's art . . . influences are on the whole assimilated, and if the strengths of the narratives are sometimes borrowed, they are nevertheless strengths, and the poems have an assurance and confidence often lacking in the personal lyrics' (p.286).
14. To F.W. McCarthy on 20 May 1869 he wrote bluntly: 'I saved my life by the step I took in leaving Sydney. There I had become a complete invalid. And what with official jealousy and family persecution, I had no chance to become better' (C.163).
15. H.P.Heseltine in 'The Metamorphoses of Henry Kendall,' *Southerly*, 41(1981): 367-89 has also noted that this poem 'is clearly a projection of his [Kendall's] situation at the time of its first appearance' (p.382).
16. The quotations are respectively from a letter to Henry Parkes, dated 24 January 1866, and 'On the Paroo' (September, 1865).
17. Further details of this dark episode are provided in Donovan Clarke, 'New Light on Henry Kendall,' *Australian Literary Studies*, 2(1966): 211-13.
18. This letter is not reproduced in Donovan Clarke's M.A. thesis, but is held at the Australian National Library, Canberra, MS.3227.
19. W.H. Wilde in *Henry Kendall* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1976) summarizes the standard views (pp.103-6) and concludes: 'The final volume is the most individualistic of the three, many of the poems being fugitive pieces that form no overall pattern of theme or thought' (p.106).
20. See Frank Myers' illuminating account of other aspects of Kendall's character in 'The Other Kendall,' *Bulletin Red Page*, 17 September 1903.

21. Even T.T. Reed, in his otherwise exemplary edition of Kendall's verse, was forced to stop short of comprehensiveness, and even to omit topical works which he had painstakingly collected, because, despite a Commonwealth Literary Fund grant, 'the cost had to be kept within certain bounds' ('Kendall's Satiric Humour,' p.364).
22. Thus, for instance, Judith Wright has asserted that 'Kendall's Christianity was conventional and not deeply felt' (*Preoccupations in Australian Poetry* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1965, p.46), while A.D. Hope bases his high assessment of some of Kendall's adaptations of Old World material simply on the poet's assured mastery of syntax and metrical forms, as if their content were a matter of little import, as in 'Three Early Poets,' in *Native Companions: Essays and Comments on Australian Literature 1936-1966* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1974), pp.125-26.

**Copyright of Full Text rests with the original copyright owner and, except as permitted under the Copyright Act 1968, copying this copyright material is prohibited without the permission of the owner or its exclusive licensee or agent or by way of a license from Copyright Agency Limited. For information about such licences contact Copyright Agency Limited on (02) 93947600 (ph) or (02) 93947601 (fax)**