

# Jamaican Writer Makes History

INSTITUTE OF JAMAICA

VIC REID has written a book that should put pride, fire and music into the soul of the inheritors of this island. "New Day" tells in vivid fashion the story of the human element that passed through as grist to the mill of a century's evolution. It is a story at once intensely insular and intensely universal. Simply told, it is a book of epic concept that foretells great things from its author.

FOR "NEW DAY" is told too in a new language of poetic beauty and strength. The narrator, an old man of nigh on 90 years (he was born in 1857) at the time the story ends in 1944, uses a type of speech, which, though not dialect, is symbolic of the many facets of Caribbean culture and characteristics. It is possible that those who have long since renounced their identity with this country either in the past or the present may fail to find the significance in the story of John Campbell and of the promise of the future in young Garth Campbell. But "NEW DAY" speaks to the hundreds of thousands of the people of our land who are proud to stand and say 'civis hesternus et hodiernus sum'.

FREE FROM propaganda, politics or polemics, "New Day" is a novel which tells the story of a Jamaican family from the closing of one day in 1865 to the dawn of another in 1944. The horrors of the Morant Bay Rebellion, the cruelty and brutality of a governor unworthy to represent the great "Missis Queen": the pathetic loyalty of many of the victims, the treachery of others, the misery, sweat, bloodshed, courage and hope—all pass through the pages of Vic Reid's remarkable document.

MOVING AND lovely is the story of David Campbell's love for the beautiful creole from Haiti. Gay, delightful touches there are in the

four thousand pounds a year. This will be shared by the four insular governments.

THE Barbados Government Savings Bank has started a traveling unit — 'mobile bank', the people immediately dubbed it—which takes a cashier to the country districts to allow workers on the plantations and in the factories to make deposits and withdrawals. This unit is fully equipped with teller's counter and full facilities for opening new accounts. Initial response has been very encouraging, and the directors of the bank hope to extend the facilities in the near future.

The Barbados Government Savings Bank pays the highest interest rate of any bank in Barbados—three per cent—and is in an extremely sound financial position, assets exceeding deposits by some £150,000. During the war years, the bank made heavy contributions to the treasury, but this needed special legislation, as legally the banks assets can only be used to repay deposits or meet interest charges,

descriptions of family life in the Campbell household. Timeless, ageless, the spirit of youth, classless, colourless—eternally human:—"I am sitting on the floor with my box-kite on my knees and form like I am looking on the torn singer while mother makes her bed with clean Sunday sheets and pillowcases. Ruthie and Sammy are gone to woodland to look firewood for our breakfast, Zekiel and Naomi are gone to the stream for water, only Mother and me here .... "There is a box-kite under my kitty-up which I swopped from Quakoo M'Laren yes-

## Inter Alia by Violette de Barovier

terday-day for a buntung mango and a croaker-lizard skeleton. A good kite, this, with one singer torn: a good kite, this, but Quakoo is always hungry. Croaker skeleton is a brawia — But I know where an iguana died last week, and an iguana is very much bigger than a croaker. A-good!"

THERE IS a lyric quality in many passages of unusual scenic word beauty: "Outside is daylight, and sea breeze is putting anger-marks on the face of the Bay. It is October month and all over Salt Savannah silver arrows wave above our cane fields to say that the juice is ripe. But cane leaves are brown and the earth is dusty, and I know are bad, these".

Hear the fine graphic touch of the author when he speaks of the emotion of John Campbell's father, ... "There is iron and heavy wind

in my father's throat..."

TOWARDS the close of the book, events seem to tumble somewhat confusedly together and the inspiration of the writer is perhaps not as well sustained. But one must turn again to the beginning to truly finish this book with understanding "New Day"—old, old story of man's struggles, hopes, aspirations—old and new as life itself, where alpha is omega and omega is alpha.

It is often left to the gifted writer of fiction to vitalise recorded history. When we may have forgotten the dates of the French Revolution, "A Tale of Two Cities" will live forever in our memories. So it is, that the histories of nations and places become part of our conscious knowledge through the pages of a Victor Huga, a Manzoni (I Promessi Sposi) and a Czech Capek-Chod. Victor Stafford Reid's "New Day" will belong to the ranks of Romances that are history's handmaidens.

Published by Alfred Knopf of New York, "New Day" by Vic Reid, young Jamaican journalist and writer, just off the press, has already created great interest in international library circles. Says Ramond Swing: "this is the output of a gifted writer", and Robert Herring writes: "it is itself undoubtedly a welcome sign of a new literature arising from those who are making those countries...."

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