

# Out of the Strong Came Forth Sweetness

THE UNIVERSITY AND THE COMMUNITY: Essays in Honour of Thomas Alexander Hunter. Victoria University College.

(Reviewed by David Hall)

SAMSON, the riddling mocker, the strong man, beloved of God, a great slayer of the Philistines, always irritatingly in the right, none the less, self-betrayed, ends badly. Delilah, mastering the strong man with the wiles of her beauty, is at least loyal to her people and, it is to be supposed, to her own nature. Is it too far-fetched to imagine a parallel between these two and the university and the community?

A community has a natural, albeit regrettable, tendency to drag a university down to its own level, seducing it with this and that, base utilitarian considerations. Samson puts forth his strength, to the glory of Jahveh, but is left blind and impotent. Delilah, getting into his hair, gets what she desires, a trophy. Eyeless in Gaza, the university becomes a servant, the community a Philistine master. What should be a preparation for living becomes a preparation for earning a living. The disinterested search for truth is in any case too delicate a plant to stand massed bedding-out in a degree course.

In the 18th Century the university's independence of the community was exaggerated to the point of absurdity. Thomas Gray, a professor of history who never delivered a lecture, might possibly be considered an end in himself, but his contemporaries, keeping their fellowships for life if only they remained celibate, were rarely so good an investment of the community's money. But is not a certain aloofness essential to the true functions of a university? Too much commerce with the passing hour can readily destroy the fine temper of an instrument which cannot serve the community in any sense unless it cherishes its own integrity. There is a delicate balance to be struck.

If the university to-day is not altogether shorn of its strength, it is due to the vigorous discontent of such men as Sir Thomas Hunter, in whose honour this volume of essays is published.

PROFESSOR HUNTER has been associated with Victoria College since 1904; thus the greater part of his 70 years has been devoted to the service of this College, but not exclusively, for, as Vice-Chancellor, he has always looked beyond the immediate welfare of his own institution to the needs of the university as a whole. Both have richly benefited from his exceptional gifts as an administrator.

Many readers of this book will be disappointed that more of its space was not given over to his biography. For one thing the two directly biographical essays, by F. A. de la Mare and G. W. von Zedlitz, are so good they whet the appetite for more. The former, with his cheerfully related stories of "Melrose tricks" on the football field or in the conference room, not only gives due weight

to the pugnacity of Hunter's temperament but also recreates the atmosphere of the early years of the College. The latter also looks back to early days when the struggle for the minimum conditions for efficient university teaching was bitter indeed, and shows the uprightness and unflinching courage Hunter brought to this struggle.

Here and there among the other essays there are biographical details. Professor Hunter's own psychological clinic, a direct contribution this from the university to the community, is mentioned



SIR THOMAS HUNTER  
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in Ernest Beaglehole's valuable essay on "Psychology and Child Guidance." Again in L. S. Hearnshaw's penetrating "Psychology and the Human Problems of Industry" a tribute is paid to Sir Thomas Hunter's pioneering work in this field. Then he was a moving spirit in the New Zealand Council for Educational Research, whose history is outlined by H. C. McQueen in a short study which places our educational research in perspective alongside that of England and the United States.

IN "The Sciences of Man and the Maori," I. L. G. Sutherland considers the main literary sources, from the journals of the navigators to modern times, of our knowledge of the Maori people, and then briefly describes the present state of anthropological study in New Zealand. He draws attention once again to an amazing situation (amazing when one considers that New Zealand has in her hands the welfare of a majority of the Polynesian race) that there is no chair either of Maori studies or of anthropology in any of our university colleges and only one lectureship in anthropology, founded as the result of a private benefaction.

One essay, J. C. Beaglehole's "History and the New Zealander," outstrips its

(continued on next page)



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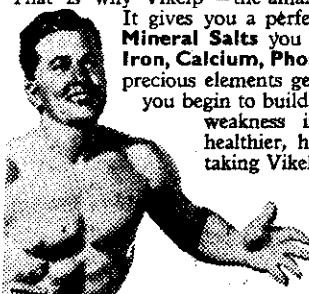
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