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STRANGERS WITHIN THE GATES

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sympathy. In conclusion I may mention the latest development—the imminent appointment of a salaried Vice-Chancellor—good evidence of continuing vitality. And so, Floreat Academia Otagoniensis!

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PRAISE WITHOUT PREJUDICE

By
W. F. ALEXANDER,
Formerly Editor
"Evening Star"

TWENTY-FIVE years of Christchurch, four of Wellington, and 10 of Timaru had been my experience when I came to Dunedin to take up the editorship of its evening journal, held for 26 years. It pleases me to think that when I praise Otago and its people I can do so impartially, with no prejudices of birth or breed.

I remember on the train, coming down to take up that appointment, getting into conversation with a leading business man of Dunedin. He warned me, half humorously, half in earnest, that I should have to mind my "p's" and "q's" there; the Kirk was very powerful and life a sober ordeal.

I remember also a conversation held not long before that with the late Rev. Dr. Gibb, who had been minister of First Church, in which he deplored the growing laxity of morals following, in New Zealand as elsewhere, the First World War, and concluded: "Thank goodness, though, it's not so bad in Dunedin. Our Presbyterian Church can take some credit for that."

Dunedin morals, then, might intimidate, but Dunedin kindness was soon evident. Posed, in the midst, perhaps, of an article, by some lack of local knowledge, the new editor would ring up the chairman of the Manufacturers' Association or any other association for enlightenment, and the answer would come back: "Yes, certainly. Can you spare a few minutes? It would be better for me to run over and I'll tell you all about it." The loss of time might be regretted, when a telephoned reply would have served the immediate purpose, but the courtesy was refreshing. Perhaps because its life is less hurried than that of some northern cities, kindness and hospitality are always prime virtues of Dunedin.

It was pleasant, after missing a tram, to be hailed by an unknown motorist, "Would you like a lift?"—"This is a good city," was the newcomer's thought the first time that that occurred, and it has been confirmed since a thousand times. He was not sure how far it was Scottish. The department of his newspaper with which he was most concerned was non-Scottish almost to a man. So was the proprietary. Scottish names abounded in other depart-

ments, but no Scottish accent. One hears that, in its most pleasing richness, from some new recruit to the tramway service come from "Glasgie," or a sudden call on a bowling green—and from older Scottish women. There were Englishmen among the first settlers in Otago. They had courage, surely, to plant their small settlements, Brightons and Henleys, among the Outrams, Lawrences and Clydes, reversing the principle of a Scottish immigrant who preferred, according to his son, to try his fortune among the English of Canterbury—"he thought they would be easier meat."

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[T was quaint to receive "letters to the Editor," in which 20 Bible texts, one after the other, would be quoted by the writer to prove his case, to be answered by 20 others, no other argument being judged to be required on either side. But that practice was diminishing 27 years ago, and it has long since ceased.

An early impression of Dunedin was that of the extent to which its University dominates it. It does still. With its multitude of special schools it is the largest university college in New Zealand, as it is also the oldest. The boarding of students is a main industry. Education has been always a first interest of Otago, in accordance with the Scottish tradition. And orphanages and old people's homes are so numerous in Dunedin as to have evoked, before the last war, the quaint comment from a Japanese visitor that New Zealanders must surely be the hardest-hearted people in the world towards their aged parents and children, being only concerned, apparently, to get rid of them in institutions.

Almost to a man those have passed away who were leaders in Dunedin's affairs when the writer first knew the city. There were big men and far-seeing men, and others by no means remarkable. After all, the newcomer had known them in some measure before. He had reported a shipping gathering in Wellington at which the mayor of that city (Hon. T. W. Hislop), the Minister of Marine (Hon. J. A. Millar), the General Manager of the Union Company (Sir James Mills), the Chief Justice (Sir Robert Stout) and the reporter for the opposition paper were all Otago men.

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[F Dunedin men value their University they have given their money to it; one remembers how professors helped to furnish their Medical School when needs were endless and funds limited. Those most prominent were not all Scotsmen; one recalls Sir Lindo Ferguson and Sir Louis Barnett—and the non-Scotch have always had their part in Dunedin's story. The best-known Otago poet was an Irishman, Bracken. Able women have worked for such

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