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avalanche. There has not been a year without its contribution; they gave to the college, and the college, one thinks, gave to them. They are scattered over New Zealand, and over the world; the bodies of hundreds of them are scattered over the battlefields of the world.

They have given much to New Zealand too; given this wealth of personality, given standards of scholarship, given research—from the days when Easterfield first preached the gospel of experiment. Their research has been as diverse as the chemistry of Robertson and the geomorphology of Cotton; the ethnology of Diamond Jenness, the entomology of Myers, the Roman history of Syme. And as researchers they have gone far and wide. The college has shared in the nature of every university—it has learnt, it has taught, it has added to knowledge. Its record over fifty years, one finds when one begins to collect the visible evidences, is quite astonishing. The list of books and papers and memoirs and theses and expert reviews is increasing rapidly. Not as rapidly as the numbers of students, of course. We started out with ninety-eight, we're going on for two and a-half thousand.

BUT what, to go back to an earlier question, has the College meant to the community? It has, of course, "turned out" eminent persons, in considerable quantity. It has turned out judges and K.C.'s and heads of public departments and archdeacons and diplomats and schoolmasters, and even a few members of Parliament. It has done its technical job well enough. What it has "meant"—for example, within its immediate community of Wellington—is a rather harder question to answer. The community, perhaps, or some of it, has been inclined to be censorious. Wellington—one says this with regret—has never been university-minded. Wellington has never been generous, in terms of cash. This, Wellington has seemed inclined to say, when funds were the topic, is the Government's business. This, Wellington has seemed inclined to say, when students were the topic, is a dreadful business. One sort of reason is obvious enough. From time immemorial universities have been the resort of youth, who have been high-spirited, and noisy, and fractious, and sometimes overly-critical of their elders; youth who have indulged in processions of political or of too broadly humorous import; youth who have been filled with a sense of mission to reform the world. (It must be said, however, that they do not stab their professors as often as they seem to have done in the Middle Ages, or to live quite such bawdy lives.) This sort of thing takes some getting used to, in the best-intentioned societies, with a university on the outskirts, and Victoria has never been on the outskirts. Its very virtues, its independence of outlook, its critical spirit, its pledged allegiance to wisdom rather than to gold, have done it no more good than have its mild youthful vices, with the Rich and the Great, the Respectable and the Proper. And yet those are the things that a university exists to promote. Those are the things which Victoria

# NUMISMATISTS NEVER DIE YOUNG

"I OFTEN wonder why there are millions of stamp collectors in the world but only thousands of coin collectors," says Harold Mattingly, former Assistant Keeper of Coins and Medals at the British Museum, and president until last year of the Royal Numismatic Society. "I suppose it's partly because there is always a large supply of cheap stamps available, while coins are neither as cheap, nor as readily available. And they are heavy things, hard to store in mass—why, a well-made coin cabinet alone costs about £40.

"I suppose there are other reasons too. One that I tell my friends out here is that you in New Zealand have the disadvantage of never having been conquered by the Romans. That means there's no likelihood of ancient coins being unearthed periodically as they are in England. At Home some old Roman coins are remarkably cheap, like the Constantine the Great, which collectors can buy for a shilling. Of course there are the rare coins too, like the Agrigentum decadrachm from Sicily, which has sold for £45,000."

College has meant; by which, in the end, it will stand or fall in the judgment of the truly wise.

Those things, and, maybe, one other thing which is allied to them. The college has always been the home of what one may call, for want of a better phrase, the "social conscience." The social conscience has made students critical, has made them compassionate, has made them rebellious and non-conformist. It has led them to nourish all sorts of heresies, just as it has led them into wars and into Christian missions and into all sorts of mad devotions and impossible loyalties. It led the professors, four decades ago, to embark on the long campaign of University Reform; it led the College Council, on one memorable occasion, to defy the whole Government and people of New Zealand. Would the community, in its best moments, when the temporary noise and gaucherie of the youth has sunk away and been forgotten, really have it otherwise? Would it have its university subservient? We know what happened to subservient universities in other countries, and to their countries. Every college, Victoria among the rest, has had its mass of the conventional among its children. Should our country not rather think with pride of the obstreperous?

Pride or shame, there sits the college on its hill, its old clay patch. It gazes down on the sea, above it are undoubtedly the stars, as its poets have so often pointed out. It has had its first fifty years. It is provincial and gawky—true. It does not win many Easter Tournaments. But it has achieved something. It has never served Mammon, whatever else it has served. It is alive. It is—students are not so sentimental as they were fifty years ago, one blushes at one's temerity with the language, but one can perhaps say the word quickly, knowing all faults and all shortcomings—it is loved.

Mr. Mattingly, who is in New Zealand visiting his daughter, and incidentally lecturing on his favourite subject to the Royal New Zealand Numismatic Society and other organisations, has made coins and medals his life's study. His specialty is Roman coinage, and his main occupation over the past 38 years has been the writing of five catalogues of Roman coins covering a period of 200 years, from Augustus to Elagabalus. The largest of these is a thousand-page volume with about a hundred illustrations. He has also written an *Outlines of Ancient History*, and a study of *The Imperial Civil Service of Rome*. "If you want to study history—especially ancient history—you must take more and more notice of coins," he says, "and I have found that Roman coinage is in itself a set of historical documents."

That didn't mean to say that numismatists weren't interested in modern coins too, he said. For instance, everyone was keen to see the New Zealand crown piece—which was coming out soon. "It was originally intended as some sort of commemoration of the Royal Tour, although there is no special reference to this on the coin itself. They did the same thing for the South African Royal Tour with a Springbok crown, and although 300,000 were minted they are already collectors' pieces, worth about 15/- each.

"Another interesting coin is the new English threepence, a 12-angled coin considerably larger than the old one, made of a yellowish metal, not brass, but one of these modern alloys. It was received with considerable suspicion when it first came out, but now everyone seems to have accepted it quite well."

From the expert's viewpoint, Mr. Mattingly thought, our own New Zealand coinage was a very good blend of the traditional and the modern (the "new world," as he calls it), and he was interested to notice our widespread use of Maori figures and designs. There was a similar use of modern symbols on some British coins too—the Ship halfpenny and the Wren farthing were examples—although we in New Zealand seemed a little in advance of England in coin design. Personally he would like to see a greater blend of the historical and the modern in British coins. He'd like to see a Bulldog penny, for instance, and generally speaking he thought English designers could afford to concentrate less on the heraldic side, preserving one heraldic design (as we

had done with our New Zealand half-crown) for the sake of continuity with tradition.

One thing about modern coinage which had often occurred to him, and this applied to New Zealand too, was that we could use more effective portraits of the King. The present ones, based on photographs, tended to be a little flat, whereas there was just sufficient relief in a coin portrait for an experienced artist to put to good use, he said. "When you've seen the great art of the past which was expended on coins and medals you sometimes feel you'd like to see better portraiture on our own coins. It's really extraordinary how much artistic effect can be got on a little thing like a coin.

"I often say to my non-collector friends that it's a curious fact that numismatists never die young," he continued. "Why is that?" they ask. 'Because they simply can't bear the thought of having to leave their collections,' I reply. It's certainly true that there seem to be two to three times more numis-



Spencer Digby photograph

HAROLD MATTINGLY

matists now than there were 10 years ago. It's partly due to the war, of course, when people seemed to turn more to hobbies of this sort. There are now 20 societies in Britain, and about a hundred in the United States, where they seem to go in for it with great intensity, collecting coins in a stamp way, you know. But they haven't a national collection such as we have at the Museum."

In his own work at the British Museum he said he had made only one really important find. That was when a schoolboy brought in a collection of about 20 pieces which his grandfather had left him. It included a brass Carausius whose existence had never even been suspected before. "Of course we always paid a fair price for any coin we wanted, since we weren't in the business in a commercial way. We certainly weren't like Verres, the Roman governor of Sicily about 75 B.C.," Mr. Mattingly concluded, harking back once more to his favourite subject. "Verres plundered and impoverished everywhere during his governorship, removing anything of value, especially works of art, that took his fancy. He was also a keen numismatist, and used to imprison people in his dungeons until they would tell him where they had hidden their collections. He was one numismatist anyway who didn't live to a ripe old age."