

task of turning a 'geographical expression' into a nation.

That said, it can also be argued that, in the longer term at least, there was an inconsistency between democratic advance back in Europe and authoritarianism overseas. It was not only that the Netherlands bred students like those who joined PI. It also nurtured attitudes like De Graeff's: a policy like De Jonge's could not forever be accepted in the Netherlands. But a policy like De Graeff's had little chance in the Indies. Even apart from the impact of the depression or the war, it seems doubtful whether any lasting compromise could have been reached between Indonesian nationalism and Dutch authority. Empire is hard to relinquish. Though colonial rulers have been prepared to go, they have often wished—as, again, in Burma—to leave behind a monument to their good intentions, one which they had designed.

If Dr Ingleson's book interests both by interpreting a phase of Indonesian nationalism and by provoking comparison with other nationalisms, it is noticed in these pages for another reason also. Historians have been anxious that specialised research of the best kind should continue to be published, despite the contracted prospects of the profession and the mounting cost of books. They have initiated self-help, in the United Kingdom, for example, through the Royal Historical Society series, *Studies in History*. With colleagues in other disciplines, they have also initiated a Southeast Asia Publications Series on the part of the Asian Studies Association of Australia, of which Dr Ingleson's book is the first. Maybe New Zealanders do not have the resources to follow these examples. But they should salute the courage and enterprise of their trans-Tasman colleagues, and welcome their generosity: members of the New Zealand Asian Studies Society are offered the same concession price as ASAA members (A\$6.35 paper, A\$14.55 cased).

NICHOLAS TARLING

*University of Auckland*

*Colonial Cap and Gown*. By W.J. Gardner, published by Whitcoulls for the University of Canterbury, 1979. 142pp. N.Z. price: \$6.95.

FORTUNATE enough to house its own historians, the college and university is one of the few institutions in New Zealand life which has been relatively well served by the professionals. But W.J. Gardner in *Colonial Cap and Gown* is the first to go beyond the standard narrative of a particular *alma mater* and try to offer some broader generalizations about the university in a new society. Gardner does not deal with all the New Zealand colleges, but simply the first two, Canterbury and Otago, which he treats alongside the three earliest Australian universities, Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. All five were founded between 1850 and 1874. In design this is an exciting project. The comparative perspective, the attempt to integrate New Zealand mid-Victorian history into that of Australian history, and the author's eagerness to hunt for larger generalizations, raise high expectations.

Some of this promise is indeed fulfilled. This book is most readable, written

with the characteristic elegance and wit of Canterbury historians. The material presented is always interesting and sometimes very suggestive. The disappointment is that these suggestions are not expanded into a coherent thesis. The work is based on the 1975 Macmillan Brown lectures which Gardner explains were intended to be selected reports on work in progress. Unfortunately the book, which is very short, still reads as a job incomplete. We get four largely self-contained chapters which simply do not follow through on the issues they raise. The opening chapter is an excellent account of the circumstances, political and social, which explain the founding of the five institutions. Gardner brings out clearly that the origins of the Australasian university were not narrowly cultural—there was little concern for scholarship, barely any demand from prospective students. Rather the colonial college had a largely symbolic function—an expression of provincial pride, a form of conspicuous consumption built on the fortunes of gold and wool, above all, as a conservative symbol of civilization designed in the Wakefield tradition to safeguard the colony from the wilderness or to redeem it, in Sydney's case, from a convict past.

The scene having been set, we now look forward to a discussion of how these goals worked in practice—what did they mean in terms of the intellectual activities of the institutions or their social roles? Instead chapter two provides pen portraits of three early university leaders, John Woolley of Sydney, William Hearn of Melbourne, and John Macmillan Brown of Canterbury. These portraits are each gracefully presented but again they do not get us a long way. We remain unclear of the social function and status of nineteenth-century Australasian academics, and we need to know more about the intellectual baggage they brought with them. Macmillan Brown after all had been educated under the high-priests of English idealism—Edward Caird at Glasgow, Benjamin Jowett and T.H. Green at Balliol. What effect did such influences have upon the content and style of his teaching?

Chapters three and four are more closely related—the first deals effectively with the process whereby women were admitted to the Australasian university, the second describes their experiences once they had got there and begins a most valuable statistical analysis on who the early female students were and what happened to them. This section of the book will prove extremely useful for social historians, while the discovery that over 50 per cent of the female graduates of Canterbury and Otago before the Great War remained unmarried is a highly significant fact for historians of women. Yet once more the analysis falls short. The Australian element virtually disappears in these final chapters, and any investigation of the careers of female students requires a comparable investigation of male students. Was the high number of female graduates who went into secondary teaching also true of male students? If so, then one might conceive of the nineteenth-century New Zealand college as a peculiarly closed and self-sustaining system—educating graduates whose most significant social function was to prepare other graduates.

But such speculation is obviously premature. This book opens up the whole issue of the social function and influence of the Australasian university, but then leaves it largely unexplored. Even less consideration is given to the second great question about the college—the quality of the intellectual life. It may be that there was very little intellectual activity in the colonial academy, or, as J.C. Beaglehole suggested in his history of Victoria College, most of the learning may have taken place in extra-curricular student activities. But at least we need far

more studies of the writings of the early teachers and a history of the curriculum before we can be certain. *Colonial Cap and Gown* will remain a useful starting point for future research, but in failing to complete its promising task, the book does not allow us to go far beyond the existing institutional histories in answering these fundamental questions.

JOCK PHILLIPS

*Victoria University of Wellington*

*'This Sin and Scandal': Australia's Population Debate 1891-1911.* By Neville Hicks. Australian National University Press, Canberra, A.C.T. and Norwalk, Conn., 1978. xvii, 208pp., figures, illustrated. Australian price: \$13.50 cloth, \$7.95 paper.

IF ONLY Dr Hicks had been given the job of chairing the Royal Commission which is the main subject of his book! When Sir John See, the premier of New South Wales, decided in 1903 to hold a Royal Commission into the decline in the birth-rate his motives were probably not those of a genuine inquirer. Nevertheless he did present the eleven men originally appointed to the Commission a marvellous opportunity to illuminate a demographic revolution. In Australia as in other parts of the Western world a fertility transition was in progress. An Australian woman who began her childbearing in 1903 was likely as not to have four children; her grandmother would probably have had at least seven. Why and how was the transition made? Sadly See chose Charles Kinnaird Mackellar, physician and company director, to chair the Commission. Dr Mackellar lacked just those necessary qualities of open-mindedness, intellectual rigour and competence in demographic techniques displayed by Dr Hicks.

*'This Sin and Scandal'* demonstrates how Mackellar botched the inquiry he dominated, or, more accurately, how he refused to make an inquiry. No attempt was made to survey family planning practices. There was no adequate investigation of whether a decline in a couple's standard of living, or a threatened decline, affected their thinking about desirable family size. This was all the more surprising since one of the appointees to the Commission, T.A. Coghlan, had for some years been accustomed to draw a connection between the birth-rate and the economy. Nor, apparently, was there any interest on Mackellar's part in whether changing educational practices were increasing the costs of having a large family. Tendentious questioning of witnesses was the rule. At least one witness—Cardinal Moran of all people—was told the answers he might properly make. The Commission brushed aside the evidence of the Victorian statistician, William McLean, who denied that new contraceptive techniques had played any significant role in reducing the birth-rate during the nineties. Nothing was allowed to disturb the assumption that selfishness was breeding smaller families. Women and the lower orders were especially to blame.

This moralism vitiates the value of the Commission's report for the demographic historian. The same is true to a lesser extent of the volume of non-