

IN MEMORIAM

SIR HECTOR HETHERINGTON

The news of the death of Sir Hector Hetherington on 15 January 1965 will have brought to all our members a deep sense of loss. He was not only one of the most distinguished of Vice-Chancellors and twice chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors, but he was also in a special sense a conspicuous and committed Anglo-American. He served as a member of our Advisory Council from its inception until his death.

His own record is well known and the story has much that is, in a now rather-old-fashioned sense, typically Scottish about it. He went up from Tillicoultry in Clackmannanshire, where his father was the local chemist, via Dollar Academy, to Glasgow University, to do Classics and with the intention of being a minister, to "wag his heid in a pulpit." He graduated first in Classics and then in Philosophy, and fell under the influence of a great Welshman, Sir Henry Jones, Professor of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow from 1894 to 1922, whose life he was later to write. After four years on the staff at Glasgow and a year at Sheffield, he was called, aetas 27, to the Chair of Logic and Philosophy at Cardiff; and, medically exempt from war service, he found himself increasingly on call as an administrator, especially in labour matters; he was one of the creators of the I. L. O. in 1919. He used to say that in those days administrators were rare, and university administrators very rare indeed; here too there has been a revolution.

In 1920 he became Professor of Philosophy and Principal of the little University College of the South West of England at Exeter, at a time when it was not yet in receipt of state aid from the University Grants Committee. Hector Hetherington used to tell with great glee how he persuaded the U. G. C. to visit Exeter and on the spot so impressed them that they decided to give Exeter official standing. He greatly appreciated the honorary degree Exeter conferred on him when it reached full university status in 1957. In 1924 Hetherington returned to Glasgow to succeed A. D. Lindsay as Professor of Moral Philosophy. But he stayed only three years and in 1927 was appointed to Liverpool as Principal and Vice-Chancellor. In 1936, the year he was knighted, he returned to his alma mater as principal.

It would be hard to exaggerate the value of his work as Principal and Vice-Chancellor at Glasgow. It fell to Sir Hector Hetherington to find, in the midst of the Clydeside depression, money for a new building or two.

It fell to him to guide the University through the six years of war, to watch over its physical safety on its all-too-identifiable eminence above the winding river, to steer its staff into the right war-time jobs, and to prepare for the new world of 1945 - a world of sudden university affluence. In the years from 1946 to 1961 the site on Gilmorehill was transformed. In these physical achievements Sir Hector took great pride, as he did also in the generosity of Glasgow men to the University. He played no small part himself, as a master tactician, in this benevolence. He was, to use his own phrase of Sir Henry Jones, "an excellent beggar."

For us his contribution to Anglo-American relations is especially significant. He went on a hush-hush visit to the United States during World War II as an adviser on war-time academic policy and to consider what could be done most effectively to further goodwill, in an academic sense, post war. His return in a bomber was a story he told in epic terms; among his fellow passengers was a certain Martha Raye on her way to American and British stations to make her own less academic contributions to Anglo-American understanding. They got on famously, even if her knowledge of who he was always remained elusive: Lady Hetherington used to express a mild curiosity about effusive post-cards from remote places that for the next few weeks were reaching Gilmorehill addressed to "Sir Hetherington, the Dean of Glasgow."

He was one of the first members of the United States Educational Commission in the United Kingdom and it was to one of its meetings in 1950 that we owe the decision to establish the Fulbright Conferences of 1952-1955, from which our own Association dates its origin. He was awarded the Howland Prize at Yale in 1957; he advised the Nuffield and the Rockefeller (and many other) Foundations for many years; and he was in particular chief abettor of E. K. Wickman and Lance Hammond in the organising and award of the Commonwealth (Harkness) Fellowships. He served almost continuously on the Committee of Award of the Harkness Fellowships from their foundation in 1925 to 1957, for long periods as Chairman. At his retirement he said with great pride that of (then) 750 Commonwealth Fellows, some 550 had owed their election to his vote; just as at his last Senate in Glasgow he shook hands with each of his then 80 Professorial colleagues - for, as he said, he had picked all of them except the two who were installed before he came in 1936. He was as much at ease at a desk overlooking Central Park or with Wick at his home in Connecticut as he was at the Athenaeum in London or on Gilmorehill in Glasgow. He was a devout golfer, an undemonstrative Scot and a good democrat; he was, in other words, at home in the Anglo-American world. Of its academic cordiality and goodwill today he can be saluted as a major architect.

E. W.