11 JUN 1924

The Daily Herald

ADELAIDE: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 11, 1924

A LIBERAL EDUCATION

LOOKING FOR A DEFINITION.

> The main purpose of the Education Society of South Australia, which opens tomorrow, will be to define, if possible, the requirements of a liberal education.

If the Education Society of South Australia succeed in defining more exactly the requirements of a liberal education, it will perform something that has so far defied the efforts of leading thinkers throughout the world. It is significant that the notice setting forth the purpose of the conferencce contains the qualification "if possible." Evidently it is felt that the discovery of an exact definition is by no means an easy task.

With that feeling most people, whether they are experts in education or not, will heartily agree. When educationalists themselves cannot arrive at anything like a unanimous understanding on the subject, the ordinary person who claims no special authority may be excused for his or her inability to provide one. Still, it is a question in which everyone is interested. If we cannot get an exact definition of what is required we must be satisfied with some sort of a makeshift that will provide for all present practical purposes.

Any makeshift adopted must be elastic enough to allow of alteration or modification when such a course is found expedient. Some people consider that an accurate definition of education is not only not possible, but not necessary. Most people, however, will subscribe to the idea that in general terms a liberal education means the development of the mind and body of the individual to their fullest capacity in the interests not only of the individual, but of the community.

The encouragement and development of the powers of thought, and the cultivation of a strong, healthy and disease-resisting body, many people believe is a good enough definition for a liberal education for all practical purposes. Under some of the systems of education now in vogue it is to be feared that the power of thought is discovered by hard and fast rules of cramming for examination which deaden the imagination and stifle originality. And most people agree that not enough attention is given by prevailing methods of education to physical fitness and the preservation of health.

If any definition can be found that will dispose of these two admitted weaknesses in existing education systems it will be heartily welcomed. Then we may have people thoroughly sound in mind and body and thus have established a society superior to that which now exists. A person who is capable of exercising to the fullest extent his thinking capacity, and also takes proper care of his body, which has been described as the temple of God, may be considered to have secured, if not altogether a liberal education, one that will make him an efficient citizen and a valuable unit in a superior society.

Whether the subjects to be discussed by the conference in question will solve the problem of providing a definition of a liberal education or not, they should be of sufficient interest to arouse interested attention. "The place of art" and "the place of music" are two subjects dealing with influences in life which no doubt have their refining and ennobling effects. "The humanities" is a subject which has not received as much prominence as it should have done One might almost think that in connection with this subject alone the elusive definition might be found. "The place of science" is another subject which one might consider of paramount importance.

The world owes a lot to science, and will owe it a great deal more as long as it is used for purposes of construction rather than destruction. "The sex problem" is one that has been approached with delicacy and diffidence in the past, but the time is coming when the evils which are known to be associated with secrecy will have to be dealt with. "Intelligence testing" is a new departure in educational methods, but whether it will be possible to measure the mental capacity of an individual in a manner similar to measuring the size or weight of a parcel is doubtful. Yet the scheme has possibilities. Mental as well as physical capacity varies. Other subjects of a comprehensive character give hope that as the result of the conference something useful will be contributed towards solving the great problems with which educationalists are faced.

AN EDUCATION CONFERENCE.

Register 11 JUN 1924

It is a welcome sign of the times that representatives of numerous educational institutions in South Australia, from the kindergarten to the University, have been constrained for their mutual edification and the public advantage to form an Education Society, for the purpose of keeping abreast of approved educational thought. In no other direction than that of child culture and training for citizenship, is it more desirable that the mental and spiritual outlook shall be broad and extensive, and that the tasks shall be performed whole-heartedly, with a due sense of the incalculable importance of the issues at stake. The revelations of modern research in psychology have practically revolutionised formerly prevalent ideas concerning methods of education, and the constitution of the child mind. Kindergartens, the Montessori system, and eurhythmics have introduced vastly better ways of captivating and training the intellectual and emotional faculties than had ever been possible under the old modes of teaching; and before the student of child psychology there may yet be a vast unexplored field. Nothing but good, therefore, can eventuate from friendly and co-operative efforts among educationists to understand more perfectly the true character of the work which devolves upon them, and to discover, and give sound advice regarding, the best ways of helping the rising youth in the community to achieve a worthy and a happy destiny. The annual conference of the Education Society, which will be inaugurated at the Institute Buildings to-morrow, promises to be pleasingly helpful to all the participants, and to prove illuminating to teaching staffs generally. The main purpose of the papers and discussions is to define more exactly, if possible, the requirements of a liberal education. When all is said that may be said on behalf of vocational training, commercial educational equipment, and "domestic courses," there remains the fact that boys and girls have a priceless spiritual endowment which needs careful fostering and development, if they are to attain to the full stature of manhood and womanhood. The conference will achieve a valuable end if it shall illustrate more clearly and definitely the right manner and process of enabling the child to claim and enjoy the boundless inheritance to which humanity is the heir.

---

advertiser 11 JUN 1924

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE.

A HIGH ADVENTURE.

Something of the glamor and romance of Elizabethan literature was recalled by Professor A. T. Strong, in a lecture delivered at the Prince of Wales Theatre at the University on Tuesday. The address was the first of three to be given as an extension course on the same fascinating subject. Professor Strong, who enriched his text with several readings, contrasted the English literature of to-day with that of the great Elizabethan period, when the works of all writers were permeated with the social and political thought of the times. It was impossible to judge that work without a swift glance at the social background The main national feeling was one of security and thankful confidence in the Tudor dynasty. Elizabeth herself was the symbol and incarnation of those impulses which were partly national, and partly spiritual. This spirit of loyalty, which was a part of the literature of the period, was intensified by the glamor of her womanhood, and fanned to an intensity of passion by the frequent attempts on her life by her enemies. This genuine national idealism was blent with a mediaeval sense of chivalry, whch survived the Renaissance. Spenser, in his "Faerie Queene," paid numberless tributes to his sovereign, and nothing could surpass the lyrical patriotism of George Peel. This lyric spirit was quickened by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1858. The earliest known example of the English historic play was performed in the same year, and it was only one of a mighty sequence of 220 such plays which followed in the fifteen years that preceded Elizabeth's death. All these plays, which were a veritable pageant of English history, were performed, and they presented one-fifth of the dramatic output of the times. Every preceding sovereign had a place in them and the historical interest thus aroused in the people soon passed on to a love of legendary lore, and in their real desire to find a high and noble story for their race many great writers welcomed the incursion into a magic realm of goodness and bravery arrayed against evil. The stories of Holinshed and others had provided Shakespeare with material on which to work. The "Polyolbion" of Michael Drayton was an itinerary of England, and the writer was undoubtedly a great poet. The moving beauty of the lines describing Milford Haven were convincing evidence on that point.

The eager curiosity which was part of the freed spirit of the Renaissance, which was the soul of the English people, found expression in the daring voyages of the great Elizabethan sailors, who were explorers of the sea, and also the dauntless travellers by land. Willoughby and Frobisher, Hawkins and Drake had in reality occasioned a new literature. There was a deep interest manifested, not only in sea fighting, but in new and strange countries. No better monument remained to English seamen and seamanship than Richard Hakluyt's "Principal Voyages, Traffics, and Discoveries," in which he traced England's sea power from the small beginnings, on to Drake's great adventures, and the heroic voyages of Davis, Frobisher, Willoughby, and Chancellor. The splendid prose of his day was apparent in Cavendish's description of the destruction of the Santa Anna.

Professor Strong read Sir Walter Raleigh's graphic description of the fight of the Revenge at Flores against fifty-three Spanish ships of war. The sonorous beauty of the phrasing justified the lecturer's contention that in some respects it was better than Tennyson's spirited description of the same event.

The praise for English discovery was sounded in many a poem, and the mixed motives which led to it also received due consideration. It was an age of pirates and buccaneers, who rubbed shoulders with saints and seers, and trade and intrigue brushed against science and religion. Idealism was there in goodly measure also, and George Chapman, poet, playwright, and translator of Homer, showed his fervent belief in it. It was an age when the adventurous spirit of such men as Raleigh and Drake and Sir Humphrey Gilbert communicated itself to literature, and when men like Sir Philip Sydney and Michael Drayton, although they never saw the Spanish Main, were explorers at heart, for the same spirit urged them and others forward in unknown realms. The tremendous interest in art and literature led even the Elizabethian fop into paths of learning, as could be seen in Sir Philip Sydney's "Defense of Poetry," and it was exemplified in some of Shakespeare's characters. The new treasures made available by the capture of Constantinople and the flight of the Greeks to Italy had been eagerly availed of in England. It remained, however, for Christopher Marlowe, with his eager fire, his will and intense passion for life and beauty, and the soaring intellectual ambition of his day, to make blank verse the staple metre of English drama.

Register 11 JUN 1924

SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES.

UNIVERSITY EXTENSION LECTURE.

The first of a series of three extension lectures at the University of Adelaide was given by Professor A. T. Strong on Tuesday evening. The professor contrasted the present period with the Elizabethan age in respect to the class connection which at that time existed between literature and the main social and political currents of the day. In the England of today there seemed to be only an imperfect connection of that kind. The main social or national feeling was one of security and confidence in the Tudor dynasty which had ruled England with a firm hand and delivered it from the strife consequent on the Wars of the Roses. Of that sentiment Elizabeth herself became in some sense a symbol, and it was for that reason rather than for less worthy ones that so much homage was paid to her by the average Elizabethan writers.

The strong and almost lyric feeling of patriotism was quickened by the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and that led to a remarkable difference in literature, and, indeed, in the work of Shakespeare himself. The pride which the men of the time took in their country's glories was extended to its past history, and even to prehistoric legends. The pride taken by the Elizabethan citizen in his country's warfare extended also to the exploits of her explorers and discoverers, and that, in its turn, evoked a vast literature. The greatest monument of the glory of Elizabethan seamanship was that of Richard Hakluyt, which had been called the great prose epic of the English nation. It began with the opening of English seamanship and passing to then contemporary times chronicled Drake's expedition to Cadiz, the voyages of Davis and Frobisher, the heroic and disastrous attempts made on the North Sea passage by Willoughby and Chancellor, and the adventures by land and sea of Antony Jenkinson.

To illustrate the splendid prose which occurred in Hakluyt, the lecturer read an extract from Sir Walter Raleigh's account of the great sea fight between the Revenge and the Spanish fleet—the battle of "the one and the fifty-three," which had inspired Tennyson's stirring ballad. Extracts were read from the poetry of the period showing how deeply the interest in discovery by sea had bitten into the brains of England's poets and thinkers.

The lecturer then drew a parallel between the spirit which impelled the seafarers and the spirit which urged poets and men of genius to make their discoveries in the world of thought and art. He emphasized the tremendously keen interest taken in learning and art throughout the period. Even the courtiers and fops of the day could not afford to do without accomplishments of that kind. The speaker quoted Sir Philip Sydney's "Defence of Poetry" in illustration of the point, and concluded his lecture with a discussion of Marlowe, maintaining that his eager, fiery will, his intense passion for life and beauty, and his soaring intellectual ambition was most typical of the early English renaissance; and that the very receklessness and lawlessness of his life seemed akin in spirit to his genius which scorned and broke all bonds in the effort to realize its highest being.

Register 11 JUN 1924

CHILD TO CITIZEN.

"A Liberal Education."

By a Contributor.

It was hardly to be expected that any phase of our national life would be exempt from the general overhaul that war conditions always bring. Still less could it be expected that our teachers would be content to work along the old lines in attacking their problems. But movements usually develop mysteriously, and just as usually imply leadership. The new education movement, as it has been called, has taken tribute of many other developments. Educationists have been examining the new medical, ethical, and psychological teaching, with the object of appropriating any suggestion that will help towards the better completion of their own task. They have been analysing themselves and their equipment.

That is merely to state one aspect of the change. The heart-searching has changed the attitude of thinking people towards the child, and towards his education. Search has been made for a new educational dynamic. The emphasis is being laid rather on John himself, John the child, than on the mental food that is to be laid before him in the school. The teacher is now more concerned with the harmonious evolution of the individual, than with the mere acquirement of facts and systems, which have for too long dominated the schools.