

Reg 2<sup>nd</sup> July 07

Reg. & Ad. 4<sup>th</sup> July 07

"PLATO, THE LITERARY ARTIST."

Professor H. Darnley Naylor, M.A., said that according to the opinion expressed by Mr. Benson, he had no right to be there, for he had had the misfortune to be brought up in a classical school and to learn Greek accents. (Laughter.) Among his ideals of education was one that it should teach sympathy with everything that deserved sympathy. He asked them to sympathize with his poor ideals, and the ideals of a nation to whom they owed everything they were to-day in literature, in art, in science, and in education. (Applause.) All his life he had been a teacher, and nothing gave him greater pleasure than to speak to or with the members of his own profession. Therefore he was delighted to address them that morning, although his "aimless remarks"—(laughter)—were upon "Plato, the literary artist." The story was told of the famous Dr. Jowett, with how much authority he could not say, that on one occasion he was luncheon with an enemy of classical study. The viands were choice and the wine good. The master of Balliol grew confidential and at last burst out with, "I must say, but for heaven's sake don't repeat it, that I sometimes think Plato a bit of a fool." That

was a dangerous heresy from the lips of one who knew more about Plato than any man of his own generation. He would leave the heresy to be dealt with by his colleague, Professor Mitchell. But it was not of Plato the metaphysician that he intended to speak. What he proposed to deal with was his marvellous power as a literary artist. Whatever the fate of Plato as a philosopher there could be no doubt that so long as literature existed men would read his "Defence of Socrates" and his description of the death scene as given in the Phaedo with all its incomparable dignity and pathetic eloquence. Plato never obtruded his own personality in his characters. Socrates might be his mouthpiece, but still it was a Socrates who spoke. That was a really great achievement in literature. He took the famous symposium, or dinner party, a work which had been too long neglected by English readers. It was never read in schools or universities for reasons which might do honour to English prudery, but certainly not to their English judgment. If they omitted a few pages, whose absence was no loss, they had what seemed to be one of the most vivid pictures of Greek life known to literature. After having quoted extracts Professor Naylor demonstrated how Plato displayed his genius for characterization, and concluded his address with a powerful word picture of the death of Socrates.

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THE UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOL TEACHERS.

In addressing the assembled audience at the concert held last night in connection with the South Australian Public Teachers' Conference, at the Conservatorium of Music, the Vice-Chancellor of the University (Dr. Barlow) extended the heartiest welcome to the teachers "from the youngest neophyte to the most enthusiastic professor." They were the guests of the University, and the University delighted to honor them, recognising their splendid and meritorious services to the whole community. They were held in the highest appreciation by all, and he trusted their union would grow in strength. "And now," added Dr. Barlow, amidst hearty laughter, "I will hand you over to the tender mercies of the musicians."

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The public examinations in music of the Universities of Melbourne and Adelaide will take place in South Australia towards the end of September. The last day of entry will be August 8.

The half term of the Elder Conservatorium begins on July 15.

TEACHERS' CONFERENCE.

CONCLUDING SESSIONS.

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS.

The Teachers' Conference was resumed at the Trades Hall on Wednesday morning, with the President (Mr. W. H. Cherry) in the chair.

—Comments and Suggestions.—

In his official address the President said he wanted to enquire into how they could do the best work in their schools. The teachers were an organized body of men and women, working under the Government in the cause of education. Their especial work was primary education, but as the majority of children attended no other school after leaving the State School it was of importance that their work should be done in the best manner. He was thankful the day had gone when failures in other callings could enter the ranks of the teachers. (Applause.) It was essential that they should ascertain whether teachers were trained as they should be. Beyond argument the State was responsible for the education of its citizens, and the first step in that direction was the training of the teachers. He did not suggest that South Australia was not getting proper value for the money it spent: the question was—Was it spending enough?

—Training a Teacher.—

Looking at the system, a boy or girl who had passed the compulsory standard served in a school, either as paid or unpaid monitor, where the head teacher had little time to devote to instructing him how to teach. He had the chance to pick up methods by practising in the school. At the end of a year, if successful in passing the entrance examination, he was admitted to the Pupil Teachers' School, where he worked with a view to passing the Junior and Senior Examinations of the University. The same work took some of the brightest exhibition boys at the best secondary schools three years. The embryo teacher then returned to the school whence he came for practical teaching for two years, and at the same time he had to keep up his studies by taking one or more special subjects with the object to qualify for University examinations. He was responsible to the head teacher for 30 or 40 children, and the head teacher had to give him instruction on two mornings each week in the principles of teaching. If the reports were satisfactory he then entered the University for two years, where he took up some of the subjects of the arts course. If he was clever and a good student, he had at the end of his term done a great deal toward securing his B.A. degree, and then he became a classified teacher, and was appointed to a school, where he was entrusted to instruct 70 children. During his University career he attended some of the best schools to see lessons given, and to give them himself, but the main object was literary.

—Something Wanted.—

That was the system now in vogue, and it could not be denied that it gave more opportunity for acquiring knowledge and was generally better than the system it had superseded. It needed, however, to be supplemented by a practising school with a regular staff composed of the best teachers obtainable, under whose guidance the student could apply the principles he had learned in the lecture hall. (Applause.) Still, that was a matter which might be left to the Government. What concerned them mostly was their own work. No system of training, however complete, would make a teacher if the right spirit was not present. He did not propose to talk about ideals, but rather to deal with the practical side of their work. Many men took up the work of a lifetime, not because of any particular love for it, but because it was the best available at the time when the choice had to be made. Teaching was sometimes adopted, not as a calling, but as a means of keeping body and soul together, until a learned profession could be entered upon. With others the emoluments were regarded, and a boy was sent to teach because it was thought he would make more money by it than in any other walk of life open to him. The true teacher would ask—"Is my aim in life personal advancement, or am I concerned in the welfare of the children entrusted to me?" When a young man began to think like that he would begin to do good work from right motives. (Applause.)