

Advertiser 14/9/21

IS THE PEACE TREATY JUST?

From EDWIN ASHBY, Blackwood:—
 The following quotation from Sir Philip Gibbs' book "Realities of War" seems so appropriate to the subject discussed in your columns that I cannot refrain from asking you to print it:—"In war France was wonderful, most heroic in sacrifice, most splendid in valor. In her dictated peace, which was ours also, her leaders were betrayed by the very evil which millions of young Frenchmen had gone out to kill at the sacrifice of their own lives. Militarism was exalted in France above the ruins of German militarism. It was a peace of vengeance, which punished the innocent more than the guilty; the babe at the breast more than the Junker in his schloss; the poor working woman more than the war lord. So if that philosophy continue, the old fear will be re-established; the old burdens of armament will be piled up anew; the people of France will be weighted down as before under a military regime, stifling their liberty of thought and action, wasting the best years of their boyhood in barracks; seeking protective alliances; buying allies at great cost; establishing the old spy system, the old diplomacy, the old squalid ways of international politics, based as before on Fear and Force." This condemnation of the Peace Treaty is by one of the world's greatest authorities on the war. The spirit therein condemned by Sir Philip Gibbs is the same spirit that has been trying to foist a 70 days' drill on young Australia, and the same spirit behind our politicians who are so strongly advocating a renewal of Britain military alliance with Japan.

Advertiser 15/9/21

THE GLORY OF DANTE.

LECTURE BY PROFESSOR PHILLIPSON.

In the Art Gallery on Wednesday evening Professor Phillipson delivered a lecture on Dante in connection with the sixcentenary of the poet's death. It was an intellectual treat in which a novel and pleasing feature was the reading by Mrs. Phillipson of two sonnets.

The chairman (Mr. W. J. Isoister, K.C.), in introducing the lecturer, said Dante was one of those men who were of no nation or time, but were the glory of the whole human race. It had been rightly determined that the sixth centenary of the death of the poet should not be allowed to pass unnoticed. The Board of Governors of the Public Library had been fortunate in getting Professor Phillipson to deliver a lecture on the man and his works.

Professor Phillipson dealt with the life, work, motive force of the work and the spirit of Dante. He said on that day 600 years ago had passed away one of the greatest of the sons of men, a soul that blossomed in the world in joy and ecstasy, passed under a solemn cloud in travail and anguish, and then emerged in triumphant victory and glory. On this sixcentenary celebration of his death they were assembled to do honor and reverence to this deathless one—for over him death, that inexorable conqueror, had no dominion. All knew his features—the noble brow, the face, long, pale, thin, and proudly composed, reticent and resolute, sad, pensive, self-denying and solitary. It was a remarkable age in which Dante lived. It was the later part of the middle ages and the thirteenth century was one of the most important and wonderful in the history of the world. Florence—that "City of Flowers"—was in many respects a mediaeval counter-part of Athens. Into this age and in this city Dante Alighieri was born, between May 18 and June 17, 1265. The name Dante was a shortened form of Durante (enduring) and Alighieri was originally Alighieri, meaning "Wisdom of the Spear." The first was a prophetic name; the second, curiously, resembled the name of England's own sovereign poet. But to all who knew his work his name meant Titan and Olympian at once. There was little information about his early life. He was left a young orphan, and his education was entrusted to Brunetto Latino, a statesman, diplomatist, and scholar, and later he studied the seven liberal arts of the time in the University of Bologna.

The lecturer outlined the political disturbances at Florence, about the time when Dante reached manhood, and the events which led up to the banishment of the poet. In 1290 Beatrice, who had for three years been the wife of a noble Florentine, died, and her death was another important turning point in Dante's life, for it led him to immortalize her and ex-

press his wonderful adoration. Some two years later he married Gemma Donati. His domestic life did not seem to have been happy. In that respect it resembled the experience of Milton with Mary Powell. For nearly 20 years Dante was a homeless wanderer on the face of the earth. In 1310 he made a final attempt to re-enter Florence. He hailed the Emperor Henry VII, on his arrival in Italy as the coming saviour of the country, but the death of Henry, soon afterwards, crushed the poet's hope. He withdrew for a time to a monastery in the mountains of Gubbio, and worked at his Divine Comedy.

The lecturer spoke of the conditions offered by the Florentine Government to Dante and his fellow-exiles for their return to Florence, and of the scornful rejection of them by Dante. Finally the poet travelled to Raenna, where he died on September 14, 1321, shortly after having finished his Divine Comedy. Such was the tragedy of his life. But his inner life! What a contrast to the pitiful ruin of his worldly existence. It was a long pilgrimage, embarked upon by a far-seeing unconquerable soul, inspired, animated, and uplifted by an unflinching love and devotion, and leading at last to a glorious triumph. His spiritual autobiography could be read in his works. It began in the "Vita Nuova" (new life), was continued in the "Convito" (the banquet), and completed in the Divine Comedy. These three works ought, he said, to constitute a kind of trilogy. The "Divine Comedy" was an apotheosis of Beatrice, for it was she who inspired him to his mighty task.

Professor Phillipson drew a wonderful picture of the vision Dante had of Beatrice—the vision that made him a poet. Dante's love obviously resembled the love of most poets, for his attitude towards Beatrice was characterized by the most tender purity, shrinking reverence, tremulous worship and sacrifice. There was nothing recorded in the world's history or literature that could equal Dante's dithyrambic ecstasy, and his profound, radiant, and spiritual conception of romantic and chivalrous love. Beatrice died at the age of 24, and then he knew the supreme pangs of bereavement and the agony of desolation. The theory that Beatrice was only a symbol throughout, or an abstract ideal, was unacceptable because of circumstantial details mentioned by Dante, and, in general, because of psychological exigencies; the theory that Beatrice throughout represented a real woman was untenable, on the ground of the clearly superhuman transfiguration. The lecturer, in wonderful phrases, described the visionary journey of Dante, guided by Virgil, through the nether regions and purgatory, and, guided by Beatrice, through heaven. The pilgrimage itself might well be taken to symbolise the ascent of the soul, the tribulations it experienced on the way, the difficulties it overcame, and the supernal joy and serenity it attained at last. The obscure forest had been interpreted in many ways; for example, youthful aberration, exile, worldly troubles, a maze of civil discord, or moral disorder. The panther, the lion, and the wolf might mean the temptations of the world, or lust, pride, or avarice, or Florence, Rome, and France. The mountain they prevented Dante from ascending might be the steep hill of virtue. Virgil might be emblematical of human intellect, skill, and knowledge; Beatrice, of divine wisdom, love, and revelation. The work was first and foremost poetry, and it was as poetry, and not because of its subtle, theological, philosophical, political, or moral interpretation, that it possessed an enduring appeal to discerning minds.

✓ Register 15/9/21

IN MEMORY OF DANTE.

A FASCINATING LECTURE.

On Wednesday there was celebrated throughout the world the sixth centenary of the death of Dante, the great Italian poet, the man whose name will live for ever in the beauty and glory of his works. South Australia is taking part in the universal commemoration of the event, lectures on the poet's life have been given, special facilities have been afforded for the study of his works, and the Public Library Committee have made arrangements for interesting illustrations concerning his life to be seen. The enthusiasm associated with the commemoration was exemplified by the very large crowd which attended at the Art Gallery on Wednesday evening to listen to a lecture on Dante by Professor Coleman Phillipson. The accommodation was all too limited for the occasion, and it is a matter for regret that a larger hall was not secured for the important and interesting event. The chair was taken by Mr. W. J. Isoister, K.C.

The Chairman, in introducing the lecturer, said Dante was one of those men who were of no nation and no time, but were the glory of the whole of the human race. It was rightly determined that the sixth centenary of the death of the poet should not be allowed to pass unnoticed, and the Board of Governors of the Public Library had been fortunate enough to get Professor Phillipson to deliver a lecture on the man and his works.

Professor Phillipson said that all he was able to do that evening was to pick out two or three points about the life and works of Dante and deal with them; but even for that limited task one short hour was insufficient to more than touch the skirts of the subject. What he wanted to do was to help to keep immortal the memory of the great Italian poet. It was just 600 years ago to-day that there passed away one of the greatest of men. His spiritual essence, the beauty and sublimity of his poetic creations, and his transcendent vision would remain for ever as a sacred bequest for the joy, the solace, and the enlightenment of the world. They were now doing honour to that deathless one—for over him the inexorable conqueror had no dominion. After giving a poetical word picture of Dante, the lecturer said that Boccaccio had written of him, "He was of dark complexion, of middle stature, had the slight stoop of the scholar, walked with a grave and measured gait, his acts both at home and abroad were restrained and deliberate, and in all his ways he was conspicuously sedate and courteous."

—The Life of the Poet.—

The name Dante, said the professor, meant "enduring," while Alighieri stood for "shaker of the spear." All Dante's works would endure for ever, while the meaning of the rest of the name much resembled the name of our own sovereign poet, Shakespeare. After referring briefly to the youth of the poet, the lecturer spoke of his support of the Guelph party, and his participation in the politics of the day. Florence was at that time torn by conflicts, fighting often took place in the streets, and turbulence was rife. When Dante was 30 he entered the guild of physicians and apothecaries, and became elected one of the six priors who governed Florence. That was the start of all the poet's troubles. The Holy See, fearing to lose its dominance of the city, sent emissaries, and the result of the visit was that Dante and his party were thrown out of office, and he was fined 5,000 gold florins and sentenced to exile on charges of misdoings and rebellion against the Pope. He had to leave the city, and, after failing to recover his position, he resigned his efforts and gave up both his party and his city. Many years later he endeavoured to get permission to return, but failed. He travelled in many parts of the world, and it was said that he had visited even Oxford. Unfortunately, however, there was nothing authentic about that. In 1310 the poet made a final attempt to return to Florence, but it was of no avail. Six years later he and the other exiles were told they could return if they paid a small fine, suffered a short term of imprisonment, and walked in penitential raiment through the streets of the city. He declined to make himself a figure of ignominy, and never returned. He finally proceeded to Ravenna, where he was received at the court of Guido Novello, da Polenta. By that prince he was sent to Venice, on a mission of peace, but failed in his object, and on his way back, disappointed and distressed, he caught a fever and died at Ravenna shortly after he had finished the Divine Comedy. Such was his life. Outwardly broken under the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, an exile, a wanderer without a home, bowed down by many burdens, beholden to strangers for his very bodily existence, the proudest and most dignified, the most uncomplaining, and in temper the most aristocratic of men, humbled to the dust, a universal, god-like genius spurned and outraged, a prophet of divine visions stoned and with bleeding feet and breaking heart, driven hither and thither, with no place wherein to rest. But his inner life! What a contrast to the pitiful ruin of his worldly existence. A very long pilgrimage embarked upon by a far-seeing, unconquerable soul, inspired, animated and uplifted by an unflinching love and devotion, and leading at last to a glorious triumph. That spiritual autobiography could be read in his works, "Vita Nuova," "Convito," and the "Divine Comedy."

—Dante and Beatrice.—

The Divine Comedy, continued the lecturer, was the apotheosis of Beatrice, for it was she who had inspired his mighty work. Dante had said that from his first meeting with her "love lorded it over my soul." Nine years later he met her in a street and it was after the meeting that a marvellous vision of her presented itself to him. Dante's love for Beatrice was characterized by the most tender purity, shrinking reverence, tremulous worship, preparedness for sacrificial service. There was nothing recorded in the world's his-

tory of literature that could equal Dante's dithyrambic ecstasy and his profound, radiant, and spiritual conception of romantic and chivalrous love. Beatrice died at the age of 24, and then Dante knew the supreme pangs of bereavement and the agony of desolation. It had been asserted that Beatrice was nothing more than an allegorical symbol, but a reasonable view seemed to the lecturer to be that the original motive force of Dante's work was the real woman Beatrice, that his profound reverence and spiritual affection for her impelled him to idealize her, and his theological views of life after death and his philosophical conception of an ascent from earthly existence to celestial beatitude led him to elevate her to a lofty pinnacle in heaven.

—Dante's Pilgrimage.—

The professor then spoke of Dante's visionary journey in company with Virgil. He said the pilgrimage was supposed to have taken place in the year 1300, and it was suggested that it was at the instance of the Blessed Virgin, St. Lucy, and Beatrice that Virgil had offered his guidance for the journey through hell and purgatory previously to his being taken by Beatrice through the celestial regions. The lecturer gave a picturesque and a delightful epitome of the journey through the nether world, and said that the strength and depth of imagination of the poet, as shown in a thousand passages of the work, had never been surpassed, if ever equalled. Obviously there was in Dante's representation of the journey a good deal of symbolism and allegory, but that phase of the work formed too enormous a subject to be dealt with that night. The Divine Comedy was an apocalypse—a poetic revelation—rather than a systematic allegory; the work was, first and foremost, poetry, and it was as such that it possessed an enduring appeal to discerning minds. It was a drama of the soul, and Dante himself was its protagonist. The work was an immortal monument, a sacred heritage for mankind, and a perennial fountain of joy and delight. During the lecture the professor read many quotations from the works of the poet, while some of the sonnets from the Vita Nuova were artistically recited by Mrs. Phillipson. At the conclusion of the address high compliments were paid to the professor for his scholarly and delightful lecture, and he was accorded a very hearty vote of thanks.

✓ Advertiser 19/9/21

SCIENCE AND THE CLASSICS.

On Friday evening a meeting of the Classical Association was held at the University. Mr. W. R. Bayly presided over a good attendance of members and visitors.

Professor T. Brailsford Robertson delivered an interesting and instructive address on "A scientist's view of the function of the classics." He began by disclaiming any minute knowledge of the ancient classics. He distinguished between training and education. By training he meant the learning to do things, the acquiring control over a piece of machinery in our nervous system. The real question for the trainer to say was what use they were to make of this knowledge when required. Highly specialized training was not education, for it was possible to have a highly trained machine almost devoid of the power to correlate one special quality to the rest of the world. Specialisation was often carried on at the expense of education. During the earlier years of the war an American professor had, without warning, given his class an examination which included such questions as—What is the capital of Serbia? Where is Gallipoli? Who is the King of England? The results were amazing. But at such a crisis in the world's history it was important for everyone to know the answers to questions of this character. Again, there was no merit in the mere difficulty of training. Music, for example, was much better taught nowadays by rapid methods than it had been a generation ago, under the old system of stiff rigidity, and the modern methods resulted in a better race of players. So in languages there should be some improvement on the old style, in which a beginning was made with the painful learning of uninteresting grammar. It was said that a graduate in French at an English university had not sufficient practical acquaintance with the language to be able to order his dinner in Paris. A new method of learning modern languages had arisen for commercial purposes. Under this system the child was compelled to use the language in actual conversation. He certainly did not in this way gain a literary knowledge of the language, but he certainly