

Register News 10-10-23

CINEMA PICTURES.

Effect on the Juvenile Mind.

Some interesting theories were advanced by speakers at the Prince of Wales Theatre, Adelaide University, on Tuesday night, in the course of a discussion, under the auspices of the Graduate Association, on "The social and educational value of the cinema."

Professor Robertson presided over a fair attendance.

Professor Strong said he would deal only with the subject insofar as it concerned the Federal Board of Censorship, of which he was a member, and which was established seven years ago. It was really a customs body, and had control over the pictures imported into Australia, and not over those manufactured locally. There were 18,000,000 ft. of film imported each year, comprising 2,500 separate films. During the life of the board 66 miles of films had been cut out. When a film was rejected, however, the manufacturers were given the right to reconstruct it. The censorship in Australia was, perhaps, more strict than anywhere else. Apart from the Federal Board of Censors, three of the States maintained their own Boards of Censors, and those bodies gave special attention to the interests of children. Enquiries had been made from all over the world regarding the connection between films and crime. Judge Lindsay (of the Children's Court of Denver, U.S.A.), a man well qualified to speak on the subject, had said he believed that the films were not so much to blame for juvenile crime as were the newspapers, although, undoubtedly, some films had a bad effect upon children.

A Standard for All Ages.

The difficulty of obtaining a standard form of picture suitable for all ages was stressed by Dr. W. Ray. He said that no picture could be made suitable for persons ranging from infancy to old age. So far as juveniles were concerned, he was sure there was some deleterious effect about the cinema. Films caused a strain upon the young mind. Efforts should be made either to alter the subjects of pictures, or exclude children of certain ages from seeing them; or, again, to have separate theatres for the young folk.

Disastrous Effect on Children.

Professor Kerr Grant argued that the way in which children were attending the cinema night after night was having a disastrous effect upon them. Even if the films were educational, it would be bad for the young people to go to see them often. Unfortunately, most of the films nowadays dealt with sexual subjects. He contended that statistics showed that juvenile crime was encouraged by the cinema. There was another side to the question, however, and that was that pictures provided a cheap form of entertainment for the poorer class of family, allowing them to enjoy their night out together. Whether or not anything could be done to remedy the evil done was a difficult matter to decide.

Respondent for the Industry.

Mr. Forster, representing the film industry, replied. He admitted that there were a few isolated cases recorded against the cinema in which children had got out of hand. For the most part, he thought, the trouble began at home. The Fox Film Corporation were at present releasing quite a number of educational films, which it was hoped would be of benefit to the young people. He considered that the Adelaide theatres were the best in the Commonwealth, conforming in every respect to the demand for healthy conditions.

Conservatorium Professor

Professor. E. Harold Davies is an original member of the Adelaide Rotary Club, representing music. There is no doubting, either, his influence on the musical tastes of Adelaide.



Prof. Harold Davies

Born at Oswestry, England, on July 18, 1867, after leaving the local grammar school he studied music under Dr. Joseph Bridge, of Chester Cathedral. The Professor graduated Mus. Bac. at the Adelaide University in 1896, taking first-class honors each year. He gained his Doctorate in 1902, and was the first student in the Commonwealth to obtain this distinction. In 1919 he was appointed Elder Professor of Music in his Alma Mater.

His outside musical activities are numerous. He is founder and conductor of the Bach Society, and Past Grand Organist of the Grand Lodge of Freemasons. For many years the Professor was organist at Kent Town Methodist church, and is renowned as the founder of the South Australian Orchestra, which promises to be even more than a State concern.

He is a firm believer in the British School of Music, and for that a cultured community should be grateful. His brother, who was organist and choirmaster at the Temple Church, London, is now professor of music in the University of Wales.

Dr. Davies is not really content with the South Australian Orchestra as it is. He has instituted a students' orchestra, which will act as a recruiting ground for the senior body. There is no better known figure in South Australian music-circles.

SOPHOCLES AND SHAKESPEARE.

By Agapetus.

On Thursday evening, under the auspices of the Shakespeare Society, Professor Darnley Naylor gave an illuminating lecture on the differences between the Greek and the Elizabethan drama. He pleaded for frank criticism even of Shakespeare. Although a competent estimate of the great Elizabethan required an acquaintance with the great dramatists of classic times, yet we did our great poet but poor service by making admiration of his works a quasi-religious test. Modern scholars like Professor Mackail, John Morley, and Frederic Harrison did not scruple to point blemishes in Shakespeare's masterpieces, and we belittled ourselves when we spoke as if no poet of the present day were worth considering. After a somewhat caustic criticism of the opening scenes in "All's Well," said the lecturer, John Morley refers to the glorious note, "The web of our life is of a mingled yarn, good and ill together," and maintains that the most melting and melodious single verse in all the expressions of our English tongue is "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well," the alliteration of the "f's" and liquid "l's" making the sweetest melody. Frederic Harrison, in his comparison of Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus with Shakespeare, often favoured the Greeks, and gave it as his opinion that Shakespeare too often imperilled, injured, or destroyed the tragic intent of his plays by allowing too much scope to his own sublime imagination. Professor Darnley Naylor, noting the points of difference between the two series of plays, said that Shakespeare often mingled comedy with tragedy, while the greatest of the Greeks kept the two unmixed. Then Shakespeare rarely wrote with a purpose. He introduced a coloured man in "Othello," but was not criticising an Alien Exclusion Act; he gave a Jew in "The Merchant of Venice," but he was not denouncing a Russian program; and his pictures of lunacy were not meant as a propaganda for lunacy reform. The Greeks, and especially Euripides, wrote with some great problem in mind. And with them the problems of religion were subjects for earnest and even sermonizing dis-

ussion; but with the Elizabethans they were dangerous subjects, political rather than pious. The Antigone of Sophocles contained a problem of the highest moment, no matter in what age or in what part of the world we lived. Briefly it was "Must I put country before conscience?" or, in the words of Antigone herself, "Must the unwritten and unfulfilling law of heaven be over- ridden by the decrees of a tyrant?" Sophocles gave no solution, but showed that in certain circumstances "the voice of the people might bring cruel and undesired suffering both on those who obeyed and those who challenged that voice." Then in a very graphic way the professor related the story of the Antigone, quoting striking and picturesque passages. Among these was a choral ode of surpassing beauty, of which a strange echo is heard in "Hamlet." "Wonders are many, but none more wonderful than man. It is he that crosses the white seas, driven by the stormy south, making a path under surges that threaten to engulf him; and Earth doth he wear, turning the soil with the offspring of horses. And the light-hearted race of birds, and the tribes of savage beasts, and the sea-brood of the deep, he snares in the meshes of his woven toils. And speech and wind-swift thought—all the moods that mould a State—hath he taught himself. Only against One shall he call in vain—Death, the Unconquerable." Much the same line of thought might be traced in Hamlet's "What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculty! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel; in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals; and yet to me what is this quintessence of the dust?" The professor remarked that no great Elizabethan play bore the name of woman alone, such as the "Medea," the "Electra," and many other Greek plays. Another striking difference arose from the Greek horror of the bloody exhibitions which delighted the Elizabethans. A violent death was never enacted on the stage; it was considered sufficiently horrible when related by the messenger. Many of the most striking verses bore strong resemblance to lines of Sophocles; and no doubt Shakespeare's quick mind and retentive memory had picked out the eyes of passages probably recited in English by the master of the village school.

A vote of thanks to the lecturer was proposed on the motion of Mr. F. Stevens, seconded by Mr. D. J. McNamara, and the Chairman (Professor Strong), in summing up, made interesting remarks upon points in the lecture.

Register 15-10-23

HISTORY OF NORTH TERRACE.

Making of the Esplanade.

By C. E. Owen-Smyth, C.M.G., I.S.O.

"North Terrace Esplanade" means the space bounded on the north by the alignment of the southern wall of Government House Domain running east as far as the Botanic Garden main entrance, and on the south by the southern fences at present enclosing the grass plots. The narrow footpath south of this fence was formed by the City Council, and can, I presume, be dispensed with by the same authority, if some additional feet be required to widen the wheeled-traffic thoroughfare. In 1876, when I remember this part of the city first, it would be stretching one's veracity to say other than that the Esplanade was a blot on the landscape. There are some photographs of it somewhere in existence. Some odd tussocks of barley grass and a few pines (Hallipensis), with numberless old tins, bones, lunch papers, &c., adorned the landscape. From the Hospital main entrance to the Botanic Gardens entrance were some fine specimens of Moreton Bay fig trees, which took precious good care that nothing green grew under their umbrageous foliage. There was some dilapidated old broomstick handle fencing in parts. I believe at the time I first remember the Esplanade it was under the care (sic) of the Curator of the Botanic Gardens. The pines, I believe, owed their existence to the Botanic Gardens guardianship. Later, Mr. Ednie Brown, sometime Curator of Forests, took charge, and planted a few sugar gums; but in neither instance was the ground dug up or ploughed. The limestone showed on the surface, so that one can easily be persuaded to believe that the results did not add much to the beauty of the Esplanade. In 1888 the year before the Jubilee Exhibition was opened, I was appointed permanent head of the Works and Buildings Department, in which capacity it devolved upon me to carry out most of the work on the grounds

of the future Exhibition, which was opened about June 1887. The late Sir Samuel Davenport, who occupied the position of—I think—Commissioner representing the South Australian Government in connection with the Exhibition, one day, in conversation with me, suggested that I should take in hand a scheme for cleaning up the Esplanade, with a view to eventually turning it into a pleasure.

Removing an Eyesore.

Money was not plentiful at the time in the Public Works coffers, but the Government of the day at once saw that the Esplanade, as it then stood, would be an eyesore to visitors, and, adopting Sir Samuel's recommendation, the ground was turned over to me to improve. The time was short, but I put on some 200 men under the excellent supervision of Foreman Williams, for many years afterwards the Departmental Outdoor City Foreman. Among other valuable suggestions made by Sir Samuel Davenport was one that appealed to me strongly, and that was that I should approach Dr. Mayo, who owned a house and grounds in the west of the city. In the grounds were numerous date palms, full 50 years old. After a short interview with the venerable old gentleman, the palms were mine to transplant. I obtained tackle and sheerlegs, and, with 22 men to a palm, the old doctor's garden had soon an altered appearance. Holes 12 ft. square by 6 ft. deep were excavated, rich soil prepared, water laid on, and before long quite a number of fine upstanding 50-years-old date palms were dotting the Esplanade and other places. It may here be mentioned that of all the transplantations undertaken by the Works and Buildings Department, only one palm failed to grow. The first lot of palms, those at present on the Esplanade opposite the Adelaide Club, were drawn on a truck by man power from Dr. Mayo's garden. Each palm with the clump of earth at the roots weighed about 4 or 5 tons—if I remember rightly. Italian rye was planted as the quickest grass to give a green result. This was in autumn, 1887, and a green surface resulted before the Exhibition was opened.

Further Improvements.

Later, year by year, as money was available and approved, the present lawns were made, new earth and manure applied, and a level, smooth surface obtained, in which couch grass was planted. Year by year ornamental trees also were planted. One row of elms, I noticed to-day, all alive, just outside Government House domain south wall. The ivy on the said wall was also planted and continued down Kintore avenue on the east wall, but people passing to and from North Adelaide, by the Parade Ground, so illused the ivy that it was taken up. The large Moreton Bay fig-trees opposite the late Sir Henry Ayers's house on North terrace were not only too large in their habit for the position, but they were dirty, shedding leaves and figs, and also preventing the growth of a nice row of elms near the Hospital fence, and making it impossible to have a lawn. So the order went forth, and early—indeed, very early—one fine morning, those huge fig-trees lay low. It was thought more than likely that if the work were done piecemeal a deputation of silly men and women would go to the Government and use the old text "Woodman, spare that tree" to some effect. So I gave instructions to put on a large gang of men, and the trees were down before a deputation could be formed. Once they were down I cared little, as I was working in the interests of the general public, and further, I think I knew what I was about. Flowers were never planted by the Works and Buildings Department on the esplanade—1886-1910. Some members of the Labour Ministry of 1910 apparently held views different from mine, for while I was away on leave, in the early part of 1911, the esplanade was handed over to the City Corporation for a term of years, so as to establish rock gardens, &c. I saw a letter in The Register from Mr. W. H. Langham, with which I am in full agreement. Having only this week returned to South Australia, after nearly four years' absence, I am unaware of the particulars that caused Mr. Langham to write his letter, but, if the Government of South Australia should permit the corporation to do away with any portion of the grassed enclosures on North terrace, I am of opinion that it will be a grave mistake. The small pathway south of the fencing can be taken into the roadway without hurting anything, and, further, I venture to opine that the present extra broad footpath on the south of the roadway could, without serious inconvenience be made narrower. The trees can be transplanted into fresh holes south of their present position.

Someone Blundered.

In connection with North terrace, it might be of interest to mention a rather unusual circumstance in regard to the Government survey plans of the lands dedicated to the various governing bodies of the institutions on the terrace. When instructions were given to design and build an art gallery on the ground next adjoining the University to the westward, the actual measurements on the ground