

"How has the system of extension lectures worked elsewhere?"

"It has been very successful in England, but it is just a question whether precisely the same system would work so well here, where conditions are different. In America it tends to be rather superficial; there seems to be a dislike to go beyond a certain depth, but the people take enough interest to talk about it. You get people to converse about a subject afterwards, and you have achieved a good deal; then perhaps they may go beneath the surface. In America there are more facilities for general education than in England—there is more actual teaching, and there is more of what you would call 'higher education.' Then, again, the American is exceedingly liberal with his money for educational purposes. There are more wealthy people there, and most of their schools and universities were founded by private munificence. This generosity is exercised almost from day to day."

"How do you propose to work the idea?"

"Well, I do not yet know much about the means, but it would be run on definite lines, of course. In England it is meant to be really educational. The system worked by Cambridge is to send capable men to different parts of England. There is a course of twelve lectures, each followed by a conversational class. You may sit out a lecture and understand little of it, but if you ask questions you have things made clear and doubts dispelled. It would not be in the nature of a debate. Then there is an examination at the conclusion of each course, Cambridge appointing the examiner. The examination is not merely to test whether the student followed the subject, but to see if the lecturer had the requisite capacity to impart information in a popular way, and did not talk over the heads of his students, or, as it were, talk to the gallery. It is of course possible to deliver an interesting lecture on almost any subject and send the people away with information not worth having. What you want is to give them something worth thinking over. That is the essence of the system. A great deal may be done by books, and a great deal is done by journalists, but that is not enough in spreading knowledge and exciting an interest in it; that is why we have these extension lectures; so much more can be communicated by word of mouth direct and in a way that cannot be done by books or newspapers. Questions go a great way to elicit information better than mere explaining. I think there are a great many people who have had such an experience of the hard dry grind of their school days that in mature life they fight shy of further study, especially as they are distracted by the cares of business. Even if they could be induced to take up by pleasanter means they might be lured on to pursue their studies and learn that there is more in life than the sordid pursuit of wealth or the indulgence in frivolous amusement—in fact that there is a real fascination in intellectual activity which opens up new fields and relieves lines of thought."

"Various members of the University take up some subject which is connected with their own professional work, and give courses of lectures upon it to general audiences apart from the strict University courses."

"The idea is not so much to give the people a great deal of information as to show them how interesting such subjects are and encourage them to read on their own account. The ordinary popular lecture does not serve the purpose—it is an amusement for one evening, and the people think little more about it. It is very little good, and moreover often leaves erroneous impressions. You want to show the public that you thoroughly understand the subject, and where they can acquire the knowledge. Now, as to these University extension lectures, the general public do not yet know what they are for, and perhaps the conversation may enlighten them. We have had only two courses, which, however, have been very well attended. It takes time to get the idea understood, and just for that reason we want the system known. It is not for people who are studying here, but for the public. In England it has been working for a number of years, and although its benefits have been much exaggerated, it has done a very great deal of good."

"We cannot deal with subjects that require a large amount of preliminary knowledge, and the tendency is to select the subjects in which most people take some interest apart from any technical knowledge. For instance, it would not do to lecture to a mixed audience upon a subject involving an acquaintance with mathematics. History, for instance, would be popular; not contemporary history, because you need to look at it from a little distance to understand it; but the history of the past. In America economics were very popular, especially with the mechanics and working men, who took a great deal of interest in the subject, and I should think would take with the people here. Then geology, botany, and kindred studies will be taken up. Professor Kennie is to give a course of lectures next term on 'The Atmosphere,' and I am going to deliver a course of six lectures on 'Home,' chiefly its construction, illustrated by lantern views. As an experiment the course is being given twice on the same day, afternoon and evening, the idea being to see at which time large audiences can be attracted."

"There will be two courses of six lectures each. Last term Professor Mitchell's course was on 'English Literature and Philosophy of the Eighteenth Century,' and was very interesting; while Professor Bunsell's, on 'Haskisson,' with lantern views, which were very beautiful."

"Try to make the public understand that the idea is to enlarge the general views of life and its intellectual interests. One is more likely in a new community to neglect that—there is so much to enter the mind—but one does not get the real sense of life, the real favour of living, unless one takes a wider interest than that, and it is culture that opens up new pleasures for us, teaches us to appreciate the material and beauties around us. The man of education and culture is contented with less than the man who lives only for wealth, and he gets more rational enjoyment out of existence. The man of intellectual resources does not require a great deal of money to make his life enjoyable."

"Professor Kennie's course begins next week, September 12; mine on September 11. An application has come from Gawler for extension lectures."

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THE MODERN UNIVERSITY.

CULTURE FOR THE PEOPLE.

THE EXTENSION LECTURES.

VIEW OF PROFESSOR BENSLEY.

The extension of University instruction by means of lectures open to the public has been tried with very gratifying success in Adelaide for some time past. It is a necessary outcome of the democratic spirit of the age that the University should no longer be a monopoly of the wealthy few, but that it should assist all who are desirous of adding to their stores of knowledge. Among those who take a keen interest in this extension of the sphere of the University is Professor Bensley, who recently arrived in Adelaide to take up the professorship of classics. In an interview with *Advertiser* reporter he kindly gave his views on the subject.

"The general idea of the system," said the professor, "is to enable people who are not professional students and who are engaged in various local occupations to keep up their general education. I should roughly define it that way the general idea of the University extension movement. It is carried out thus. The professors, apart from their usual work, give evening lectures dealing with their subjects in such a way as to interest persons who are not professional students. I might add that the University extension system has been working in England for over 20 years on certain definite lines. In England the two universities of Oxford and Cambridge took it up, and the general plan is this:—A number of lecture courses are formed all over England with local committees. These centres enter into correspondence with Oxford or Cambridge and the university sends them a lecturer on a subject chosen by the committee of the local centre. The lecturer gives a course of 12 weekly lectures; every lecture is followed by a 'conversation class,' and at this class many members of the audience may ask the lecturer questions about points in the lecture which he or she has not thoroughly understood. Then besides this, all members of the audience who wish to do so produce each week written essays on topics connected with the lectures and suggested by the lecturer, or they give answers in writing to questions on the subject of the previous lecture, which have been set by the lecturer. At the conclusion of the whole course an examination is held, in which those members of the audience are admitted whose paper work during the term has been approved by the lecturer. The examination is conducted by an examiner specially appointed by the University, and the examination thus serves as a test not merely of the way in which the lecturer has handled the subject, but the care with which they have followed the lectures, but also of the skill of the lecturer in explaining the topics with which he deals."

"As a rule, before the beginning of the course, the lecturer publishes a syllabus or analysis of the lectures which he is going to deliver. This is a very great help to those who wish to read up the subject of each lecture before it is delivered. I may say that for one of my own courses in England I published a printed syllabus of over 40 pages in length, and had it interleaved with writing paper for the advantage of those of my auditors who were in the habit of taking notes."

"It will be seen that this system, as worked in England, is an attempt to provide courses of lectures which shall attract general audiences, besides offering special facilities to those who wish to study the subject more elaborately."