

always precede any attempt at specialization. There are too many nowadays like the frog of fairy fame who devoted himself so entirely to his profession of music that he had no time to acquire miscellaneous information.

But perhaps the very finest address given at the Convention was that of Miss Helen Stewart, of the Victoria Public Library, on "Children's Reading, and the formation of Reading Clubs." The title sounds rather formal and technical, but Miss Stewart knows what a title is for, it is never her master, but always a most obedient and efficient servant. Not one thing that she said stepped out of that title, yet her address was an indictment of our thoughtless, mechanical civilization, and a plea for better things. She made the well-founded charge that we no longer know how to think, that we are afraid, we dare not think a thing through. We live in a mechanical age and we are a mechanical generation. Just as conservative as our fathers, just as suspicious of change, just as jealous of tradition, we have made of our educational system a machine for turning out young people carefully inoculated with a set of selected facts, guaranteed all alike, certified incapable of an original thought. Any originality a child may display is carefully pared off to make him fit our system before we allow him to leave the Procrustian bed of our schools.

As one remedy for this distressing condition Miss Stewart advocated giving the child a greater background of the experience of the race against which to rear his little personal experience. In order to do this she would acquaint him by means of books with the culture of past ages, and other lands. The fables, the poetry, the fairy-tales of all races and all times, are the heritage of all children. Miss Stewart would have them enter into their inheritance.

Miss Stewart was not the only speaker who charged our present system of education of fostering mechanical responses instead of thought. Over and over again was the point made in a variety of ways that we must demand, not a parrot-like repetition of facts learned, but a thoughtful statement of principles.

Reforms or radical changes in education can not come from without, no matter how interested the general public may be, the leadership must come from within the profession. It is indeed a matter for discreet rejoicing that the teachers of British Columbia are alive to the faults of our present-day education, and ready and anxious to see them corrected. This seemed to be the keynote of the Convention, struck softly but firmly; we are ready for a decided forward step in educational matters; where is the strong, wise man who will lead us?

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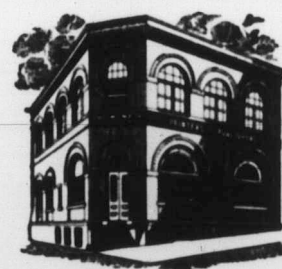


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