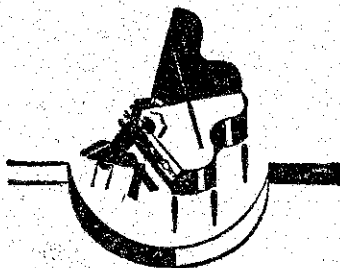


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DUNEDIN W.E.A. LECTURES

Philosophy and Maori Culture from 4YA

The Otago W.E.A. session during the early part of October will be taken by Mr. J. M. Bates, who during 1933 has been lecturer in Philosophy in the University of Otago. Mr. Bates proposes to discuss the human side of some great philosophical thinkers, with special reference to figures as diverse as the Athenian Socrates, the Scottish David Hume and the German Immanuel Kant. Though the approach to philosophical studies is sometimes guarded by what appear at first sight to be difficult habits of speech, many people who refuse to be deterred by these preliminary difficulties probably find themselves in a position similar to that of the famous Frenchman invented by Moliere, who on seeking instruction in the art of writing prose was greatly astonished to discover that it was prose which he has been in the habit of writing all his life. Whether we know anything about philosophy in a conscious way or not, even the least reflective of mankind occasionally philosophises, speculates about the meaning of life, the inscrutable riddles of the universe. In one important sense the problems of philosophy are unchanging, eternal; the language has altered, but the underlying ideas with which Plato for example grappled are often uncannily like the ideas which reflection upon the most knotty problems of modern society frequently suggest. But at the same time the content of philosophical ideas also grows and develops. To be a great thinker often means a not entirely comfortable position in the world. Thought is liable to be disturbing, and although changing circumstances demand growing and developing thought, even those who are in closest touch with the changing circumstances do not always realise the necessity for such growth, and those who make themselves the instruments whereby new ideas germinate and spread are often regarded with the utmost suspicion by people who find new ideas upsetting.

Later in October, Mr. H. D. Skinner, lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Otago, and one of the leading authorities on Maori ethnology and culture, will conduct listeners on two imaginary half-hour tours of the Maori gallery in the Otago University Museum, with the management of which Mr. Skinner is closely associated. It is no novelty for even the most philistine of laymen to observe that the day when museums were justly regarded as musty collections of tiresome bones and stones, to be glanced at only under the pressure of the most gloomy weather which precluded activities of a more enlivening character, has long since passed, and in nearly every part of the world, even in small towns which might feel themselves overwhelmed by more substantial neighbours, museums have in recent years developed along lines which at once arouse lively interest and attention. Among the museums of the Dominion, Dunedin occupies a worthy place.