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Educational Broadcasting.

ALREADY we have heard much concerning the powerful influence which broadcasting must have upon what we now accept as civilisation. Its effect in helping to break down national and geographical barriers, and its consequent destruction of the suspicions, hatreds, meannesses, and intolerances which ignorance breeds among peoples living within narrow circles, cannot yet be fully estimated. That effect is a result of a broad and informal educational influence. It is an effect which is inevitable just because broadcasting cannot be other than an educational influence. If that be the case at present, it is clear that, when the possibilities of broadcasting as a formal and deliberately organised means of education are considered, there can be no doubt that an instrument of incalculable value will be shaped for the service of mankind.

The British Broadcasting Corporation is to be congratulated upon the steps it has taken towards linking its activities with the educational system of Great Britain. From its early days it has striven untiringly towards that end. The history of those steps may be briefly described. It began with a committee of inquiry into broadcasting and adult education under Sir Henry Hadow. Then followed an interim committee to deal with that specific problem. Finally, a central council for broadcast adult education was set up under Lord Justice Sankey. That council is composed of representatives of the most important national interests, and it is now completing admirable organisation which will use wireless in the great service of adult education. Meanwhile, the famous Kent experiment in the use of wireless to broadcast to schools having been successfully completed, the B.B.C. has just set up a central council for school broadcasting under the chairmanship of the Right Hon. H. A. L. Fisher, which is composed of similar national interests to the council we have described above. This council is proceeding to deal with the specific problem of broadcasting to schools.

The building of such excellent machinery cannot, of course, be productive of anything but good. If, then, at the very moment when we wholeheartedly welcome it, we also make one or two suggestions for its use, we feel sure that we shall be acquitted of any desire to make querulous and carping criticism at too early a stage. The B.B.C. is, however, a very modern part of modern life, and we would be sorry if it missed the special opportunities it has of taking care that its educational

activities follow, and get the best out of, the changes which are taking place in the structure of our civilisation. That does not mean that it should wholly ignore tradition or indulge in a crude stamping upon our special—almost sanctified—academic traditions. It means the frank recognition of new values which the changes we have mentioned are presenting us.

For our present purposes we have in mind the work of adult education rather than the work of our primary and secondary schools; and we direct attention to what we have called new values because, in a paper on the relation of broadcasting to further education, read recently to the Association of Technical Institutions, we see a tendency to make the old distinction between what is called cultural and what is called vocational education. "I have often wished," said Mr. Siepman, the author of the paper, "that it were possible to introduce into the technical colleges more subjects representative of the cultural *as opposed to* vocational interests" (our italics). Later he suggested that by "correlating cultural and vocational aims, and by the establishment of a broader basis of instruction, and an attempt to give to the life and work of your institutes a social as well as academic significance," a recruitment of disinterested students would take place. Finally, he is "inclined to think that the technical subject [for the purpose of a broadcast talk] is less appropriate than the cultural," and suggested that, while the B.B.C. will go carefully and sympathetically into the matter, there is no "immediate possibility of the extensive adaptation of our programmes to your needs."

If Mr. Siepman thinks that those needs include broadcast talks on engineering or chemistry or building, we are sure he does not yet understand the tone and spirit of the modern technical institution. If he thinks that the curriculum of the same institution does not include subjects which he himself would regard as "cultural as opposed to vocational," he is very much mistaken. His errors are, however, common ones and arise out of the words 'technical education.' Much misunderstanding might be removed if Lord Eustace Percy's phrase 'education for industry and commerce' were used. It is a term which may be neither entirely satisfactory nor descriptive, but it would help to do away with much of the false distinction between cultural and vocational education—the new phrase under which the ancient and arid controversies over, and distinctions between, science and art, tends to be revived.

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If education is to help in the solution of our problems, we must realise that to treat academic matters apart from social and industrial matters is to fail in all of them! What are usually known as academic or cultural subjects are only a part of education. In themselves they cannot support life as we know it. The spiritual values on which we set so great a store are dependent on what are, at first sight, merely material things. But the two cannot be separated. Education for industry and commerce can be, and is, used to make men and women realise social relationships. Through the grouped course methods of technical institutions, students are shown how one subject is akin to others, how it has value not merely in its own utilitarian content, but also in kinship with others which are at first apparently independent and unconnected.

The process is producing a culture which is wider and nobler than our older notions, a culture which is neither lonely nor snobbish, a culture which does not stop short at pleasant abstractions, but is forging a link between the many sides of our world and humanising industry no less than making it efficient. Those who know technical institutions know that they are places where is taught not only the art of earning a living, but also the sacred art of living itself.

We hope, then, that the B.B.C.'s new educational machinery will not hold too fast to all the parts of academic tradition; that it will realise the vital need for education to march with our changing conditions; that it will be thorough in its examination of phrases like 'cultural and vocational and technical subjects'; and that it will regard the changes to which we have referred not as tending to a blind and formless industrialism, but as the outward forms of the newer values which science has made available for us.

A Criminal Tribe of India.

The Land Pirates of India: an Account of the Kuravars, a Remarkable Tribe of Hereditary Criminals; their Extraordinary Skill as Thieves, Cattle-lifters and Highwaymen, etc., and their Manners and Customs. By W. J. Hatch. Pp. 272 + 16 plates. (London: Seeley, Service and Co., Ltd., 1928.) 21s. net.

INDIAN ethnology has been a favourite exercising ground for theorists. Recent political developments have done much to encourage them along certain lines. Starting from above and adopting the view of a dominant social order, they have