

Review 17.4.17

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

Mr. Herbert Heaton, Director of Tutorial Classes, writes:—"May I be permitted to correct a serious misconception which exists in the minds of some members of the Chamber of Commerce concerning the aims of the Workers' Educational Association. The Workers' Educational Association does not exist for any political or economic propagandist purpose—neither to preach harmony between capital and labour on the one hand, or socialism on the other. It is purely an educational body, non-partisan and non-sectarian; and is as free from allegiance to any economic or political faith as the Education Department, the Public Library, or the University. Its aim is to provide a platform, a meeting ground, on which people of all shades of thought and diverse interests can meet for the thorough and impartial study of some subject in which they are interested. That meeting ground is found in the tutorial class, which for three years engage in the systematic study of whatever subject may be chosen—economics, history, philosophy, political theory, &c.—under the leadership of some properly qualified university teacher. The full course consists of 72 lectures, each of which is followed by an hour's free discussion, in which all members of the class may participate. In this way every point of view can be brought forward, examined, and criticised, and by such freedom only can one get at the truth. But there is no attempt to make any forced conversion, or to push any particular theory down any one's throat. If a man, having found truth, refuses to accept it, that is his own concern. But we believe that by means of such thorough study, with the clash of minds and the free discussion, we can destroy the superstitions and smash the fallacies which are all too common in our national thinking. In view of what I have said, it should be clear that the Workers' Educational Association cannot do anything directly towards establishing 'friendly co-operation' between labour and capital. Only labour and capital can do that. But it can, if both sides wish it, form a class for employers and employees for the study of the economic problems which envelop and perplex the nation. If the Chamber of Commerce and Trades and Labour Council would provide 15 students each such a class could soon be formed. I do not guarantee that it would bring peace; it might bring a sword. But at least it would enable the two sections of society in whose hands rests the future of Australia to shed some of the prejudices, to appreciate the others' point of view, to recognise the difficulties, and possibly to find some way out of the deadlock which bars our social progress to-day. If such a class were successful, there would be an excellent precedent for the formation of one composed of equal numbers of Liberal and Labour members of Parliament."

Review 7.4.17

UNIVERSITY DEGREES.

A movement is being inaugurated with the object of increasing the usefulness of the Adelaide University, especially in connection with post-war problems. Science and higher education have enabled Denmark, France, and other countries to recover rapidly from the effects of disastrous wars; and, although Australia has suffered little directly from the present conflict, many serious issues will have to be dealt with. It is proposed to pay special attention to the development of our national resources and the technical training of men in public departments. Instead of the usual extension lectures, addresses will be given by the heads of the chief technical departments. These lectures, in conjunction with the tutorial classes to be established by the Workers' Educational Association, will bring the University into closer relationship with the manual workers, and enable them to increase their efficiency and obtain a more intelligent insight into great financial and economic problems. Since its establishment in 1874 much good work has been done by the University, and many of its graduates

have achieved notable success in professional and business life; but, after all, only a small percentage of the citizens have utilized the advantages of University training. Experienced observers have urged that the popularity and usefulness of the University would be greatly increased by a modification of the somewhat stringent regulations concerning the arts and science degrees. It is said that many intelligent men and women are debarred from gaining a B.A. or B.Sc. degree because they have not previously matriculated. The Director of Education in New South Wales recently reported:—

By its adherence to the matriculation requirement the University either excludes many students who are otherwise admirably fitted for degree studies, or compels them to study while at school subjects which they do not intend to continue after they have entered the University. It is a deplorable fact that many boys who have passed with credit in English, French, mathematics, history, and chemistry are considered unfit to study for an arts or science degree because they have not matriculated.

As a result of rigid insistence on the classics much valuable time is wasted in our secondary schools. Teachers and scholars spend many hours in wading painfully through the unexciting adventures of "the plus Eneas," or making translations of Julius Cesar's prosy accounts of Belgic and Helvetian wars. They would be more profitably employed in learning a modern language and in making a closer study of our incomparable English literature. To attach too much importance to the "humanities" is a monastic and medieval ideal of education, out of harmony with modern educational requirements. Some recent examination results are worth considering in this connection. Of 850 candidates for public examination only 14 took "business principles," while economics (a subject of great practical value) attracted not more than 18. But there were 632 candidates for Greek, and 548 for Latin! Such conditions will doubtless continue until the classics shall be made optional so far as University degrees are concerned. The University is the goal of most boys and girls who attend secondary schools, and the curriculum of those schools is determined largely by the requirements for the junior, senior, and higher public examinations.

Daily Herald

18.4.17

ECONOMICS

"GOOD OLD TIMES"

ROMANTIC BUT LAZY

MR. HEATON'S FIRST CLASS.

Is the study of economics worth while?

The tutor of the first University Tutorial Class in Economics (Mr. H. Heaton, M.A.), dealt with that question at the University last night.

He maintained there was a great value in the study, for the economic factor was an important one in shaping the form which society was to take. In the old days the economic factor had been neglected, but Karl Marx in the 70's, had come upon the scene and had pointed out the need for studying economics because it was not the church, the monarch, or the army alone which governed a people. The great thing was the bread-and-butter problem. It was the one which with the people had to grapple.

—Nation's Happiness.—

The happiness of a nation was due—not to one, but to many things. The economic factor was not the only one truly, but the big fact remained in the life of the nations that the economic position was of great importance.

It was the economic considerations of the past which had really caused wars—not mainly religious differences, or matters of principle. The trouble at the time of the Reformation in England and the time of the beheading of Charles I. was caused a great deal by economic problems. While one must admit that religion and intellect were great, economics was also great.

Another reason for the study of economics was its utility. For the first time in history, during the past few years nations had been trying to mould their destinies through the people. All governments had been calling in the aid of the people. Social reconstruction had been going on vigorously since 1800, and people had been endeavoring to put their houses in order. That would be a far more pressing and difficult problem after the war than it had been previously. If they were to find a cure for their national ailments they must start with a sound economic grounding, because that could be obtained only by investigating principles. They would find that certain effects always made themselves felt on a people.

—Spreading Ideas.—

It was easy to spread ideas in the present days of the cheap press, and that was all the more reason why they should get a good grounding. The man who appealed to "commonsense" often really did not do that at all. Economics stiffened a man's ideas and taught him to become more balanced.

Another reason why they should study economics was that it would help them to see that there was no one thing which would cure all the evils of society. Even if the many suggested panaceas were applied, they could not reform the world in one day. Economics showed them that Socialism, totalitarianism, syndicalism, and Christianity, were each insufficient in themselves.

—An Evolution.—

Economic doctrines showed them that society was an evolution. They could not cut themselves from all outside influences. They could heal society only slowly, and sometimes most painfully. The study of economics, however, made them optimistic. The "good old times" theory was all rubbish—in short, a collection of fibs. "Once upon a time," they were told that everything was all right. It might be easy to imagine that such a thing existed, but really such an assertion was all moonshine. It was not a question of getting back to the "good old times." The idea was romantic picturesque, and lazy. But it was not true. Studying economic history for the past 100 years, one saw that slowly there had been a great advance. Let them compare the days of Waterloo with the present. There were hundreds of ways in which one could prove that the "good times" were not behind but were ahead.

—History Repeats Itself.—

He said that in the first 12 months they would study the events of the industrial revolution, say, between 1760 and 1820, when mankind went through a change which was really epoch-making. As far as possible, he would deal with Australian development and problems, but they did not live to themselves. It was said that history repeated itself. That idea had many supporters, and there was a certain measure of truth in the supposition that things came round again in due course. But new powers had come in the last century, which had smashed the practices of three centuries. Steam power and machinery came. The world was faced with new problems, and gradually it had built up an order. It was quite possible that in the near future their new system would be smashed again. In that way history seemed to repeat itself. Australia had not been the first regulator of wages, that had been done in Europe centuries ago—in the middle ages. Even the history of wages went in a cycle. One could go back 3000 years, even, and could show how trusts and monopolies existed. That thing went in a kind of cycle also, which economics would show.

—No Finality.—

Their study would also show them that there was no finality. Some people thought that once they solved certain problems they would be able to go on in a kind of perpetual motion. But they would find through studying economics that there was always another thing which had to be settled. To-day the syndicalists said they had no time for the "old-fashioned" Socialist. There was no finality.

—The Human Element.—

Then their study would show them that in all their considerations they must place the utmost importance in the human element. It was the most important factor of all. It did not depend so much on the shape of an organisation as upon the spirit which animated it whether it was to achieve its purpose. Socialism might be good, but it must have good men. Capitalism was not so inherently bad—it was the man who worked the system. Chas Kingsley had said:—"I do not want more of this system or more of that; but I want more of the grace of God!" The human element was most important.

Advertiser
23.H.17

THE LATE CAPTAIN H. E. S.
ARMITAGE.

South Australia has lost another promising young man by the death in action of Captain (Acting Major) Harold Edwin Salisbury Armitage, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Armitage, schoolhouse, Millicent. The year—

was born at Norwood on November 11, 1894, and had a successful career at the Houghton Public School, School of Mines, and Adelaide High School, where he passed the junior, senior, and higher public examinations. He entered the University, and was completing his first year in the B.A. course when he answered the call to duty. In football he played for the Houghton, St. Bartholomew's, and A.H.S. teams, and belonged to A.H.S. and University crews. Beginning with the cadet system he soon showed his ability for military work, and before he was 20 years old had qualified for a commission in the 7th Regiment. At the outbreak of war he endeavored to resign his commission to enlist with the first contingents, but was refused permission. In December he entered a training school at Brighton, passed top in the examination, and was sent on to Oklands to help train reinforcements. A regulation that no officer under 23 was to be taken was specially relaxed on account of his abilities, and on April 20, 1915, he left Adelaide for the front, and in five weeks' time he was in the firing-line at Gallipoli. From that time till the end came, with the exception of seven days' leave in England, he was in all the actions of Anzac, Gallipoli, and the Somme. He gained his first lieutenantcy at Anzac in August, 1915, and for the last three months there was acting captain. After a short stay at Lemnos the battalion returned to Egypt and took part in work in the Sinai Desert. When the 4th Division was formed many officers and men from the battalion were transferred to the 50th, and among them was "Rollo," who received his captaincy in March, 1916. After further training in Egypt the new division reached France in June, and at once moved up to take part in the great push of July. August saw it engaged in fierce fighting round Pozieres and Monquet Farm, where Captain Armitage distinguished himself by his courage and readiness of resource. Lately he had been acting major, and an appreciation of his abilities is conveyed in a letter of a Millicent soldier, Sergeant Gurr, to a resident, in which he states:—"Harold Armitage is doing splendid work. He is a major now, and the men of his company all love him and swear he is the best officer in the A.I.F." The end came at Bapaume, where, as Gibb and Captain Beau say, "the Australians were foremost," and foremost among them probably were the battalion and Captain Armitage. A sad circumstance is that his C.O. had just promised him leave in order to meet his younger brother, Midshipman G. W. T. Armitage, who expected to reach England about that time. He fell gloriously just as the dawn of victory was breaking on the Western front.