

Register 9/7/14

was why they lost their liberty. Given the same conditions, remarked the professor, in closing, how could they stop a similar thing happening again? The answer was that it never could happen again, because the factors had changed. The system to which he had referred was manufactured to meet the emergencies of life as they arose, and the same process was going on in Australia. They were building a political and economic system in the Commonwealth. They were building a house to live in, but it would never be finished in their time. If they wished to build surely and safely for the future, they should try to discover why their ancestors built as they did. There lay the sphere of the Workers' Educational Association. If such an association was established and flourished in a community, then that community had taken steps towards the formation of an educated democracy, and the achievement of all that an educated democracy must bring about. (Applause.)

A great many questions from members of the audience were answered by Professor Portus, who, in response to a cordial expression of thanks for his address, stated that the professors of the University welcomed the workers' educational movement with open arms, and were most anxious to give it all the assistance they could. (Applause.)

Adventures on 9/7/14

## WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION.

### FIRST UNIVERSITY LECTURE.

The interest shown in the lecture given at the University of Adelaide on Wednesday evening by Professor G. V. Portus on "How the first English workers lost their liberty" may be taken as a good augury for the future of the Workers' Educational Association. Intending members of the proposed tutorial classes were specially invited to be present, and the audience, consisting of both men and women, was described by the chairman (Mr. T. Ryan, president of the Adelaide Trades and Labor Council and of the Workers' Educational Association in this State) as being one of the most representative gatherings of workers he had ever seen in South Australia. Mr. Ryan mentioned that other lectures, it was hoped, would be given before the inception of the tutorial classes. Dr. Halley had been invited to speak on hygienic matters, Professor Gonner on "The Comparison of Costs," and Miss Allen on "The Philosophy of Education." A sufficient number of students had already been enrolled to form two classes in economics and two classes in industrial law, and they had strong hopes that Professor Naylor might help the movement by inaugurating a course of lectures on literature. (Applause.)

In opening his address Professor Portus said the study of economic history was more necessary now than ever it was. Although it was not an exciting subject, with accounts of battles and murders, and despite the fact that it offered nothing brilliant in the way of biography, yet they were beginning to realise its importance. Its causes and changes were slow, but more and more it was being seen that the economic causes were the effective causes of events. The lecturer invited his audience not to be over-anxious to rush into economic theories. Theories of production and distribution were very often caused by the conditions in which their authors lived. The best way to get a proper understanding of economic theories was to look at economic history. The first English workers were almost entirely agricultural. By economic freedom, the subject with which he would deal, he meant the right of a man to work where he liked, when he liked, and how he liked. About the year 100 A.D. a Roman named Tacitus wrote a book about Germany and its tribes, and told the kind of people the ancestors of the English were. That was 300 years before they crossed over to England. In a very rude manner they tilled the soil and grew wheat for bread, and barley for strong drink. On the whole they had a democratic form of government, and settled public matters in a council of the tribes. The kings and chiefs received portions of the fines imposed, and also voluntary contributions. Their principal occupations were war and agriculture, and they were much fonder

of war than of agriculture. That was the state of those people about 450 A.D. By 1000 A.D., however, the English agricultural laborer was not a free man, because he was made to work for his lord at certain times, whether he wished to or not.

In a popular and attractive way the lecturer described the Saxon invasion of England. He explained the formation of agricultural settlements, and the division of labor. As war was the normal state of the inhabitants of England from the year 450 to 1000, the tillers of the soil had to support the kings and their followers in return for the protection they received against bands of marauders, so they paid rent in labor or rent in kind. Eventually the agricultural workers became so tied down to their land that there was no market for free laborers, and if they left their holdings they lost the protection of their lords. Thus a feudal system was introduced long before the Norman conquest. It meant that a class of military specialists obtained domination over what was originally a nation of free men. When they came to England those who followed the occupation of war were gradually raised up in the economic scale, and those who were agricultural workers were gradually depressed in the economic scale. That was why they lost their liberty.

Given the same conditions, remarked the professor, in closing, how could they stop a similar thing happening again? The answer was that it never could happen again, because the factors had changed. The system to which he had referred was manufactured to meet the emergencies of life as they arose, and the same process was going on in Australia. They were building a political and economic system in the Commonwealth. They were building a house to live in, but it would never be finished in their time. If they wished to build surely and safely for the future, they should try to discover why their ancestors built as they did. There lay the sphere of the Workers' Educational Association. If such an association was established and flourished in a community, then that community had taken steps towards the formation of an educated democracy, and the achievement of all that an educated democracy must bring about. (Applause.)

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Daily Herald 9/7/14

## THE WORKERS' FREEDOM

### EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION AT WORK.

A new departure in lectures was instituted at the Prince of Wales Theatre at the Adelaide University last night under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association.

Professor Portus was the speaker, and his topic was "How the Ancient English Worker Lost His Freedom." Proof that the workers themselves appreciate the innovation was to be found in the fact that almost the entire audience consisted of working men and women. The cloth, the law, and the political element were each represented, however.

Mr. T. Ryan introduced the lecturer and stated that the tutorial classes in economics, industrial law, literature, and hygiene in connection with the Workers' Educational Association would very shortly be inaugurated.

Professor Portus said he did not intend to go farther down the centuries than the year 1000. "Rebellions of the belly," Lord Bacon had said, "were the hardest to fight." He believed that, and, further, he did not believe that they could be fought until the people who rebelled from that cause had food. It was important to study economic history. How did the first English workers—they were agricultural—lose their freedom? He meant freedom to be understood as the right of a man to work where he liked, how he liked, and when he liked. The earliest English had a strong family life and were great fighters; they had a kind of universal military service. They had

plenty of land. There was no such thing as private ownership. They were on the whole under a democratic government. He quoted chiefly from the Roman historian Tacitus, who said in effect that they were their own masters practically, and they were mostly occupied in war and agriculture—the former chiefly. That was a picture of 450 A.D. In 1000 A.D. history showed that the tiller had come because of economic pressure, much more under the power of the leaders; he was not a free man either legally or economically, and could not do as he liked with his labor. What were the causes? He went on to show that the land had gradually become monopolised; the worker had allowed himself by almost imperceptible stages to come under the power of the representatives of the throne. The Crown had by degrees delegated its power to others, and it was these who had robbed the worker of his freedom.

It was announced that on Sunday, August 9, Professor Gonner, lecturer on economics to the Manchester University, visiting Australia with the British Association for the Advancement of Science, would lecture in the Adelaide Town Hall on "Costs," a study of the relative value of wages in different countries.

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## A VISIT TO HALLETT'S COVE.

### Seaside Suburb Over the Hill.

[By our Special Reporter.]

"Sermons in stones." What a wealth of meaning there may be in that phrase was learned by the writer when at Hallett's Cove the other day with Mr. Walter Howchin, F.G.S. Mr. Howchin used to be a preacher in the Primitive Methodist ministry in England until his constitution broke down 25 years ago. In his rest time, however, he had tramped the countryside of the homeland and made its rocks tell their histories. He came to Adelaide in search of health, and happily found restoration in large measure. Varying frequent preaching services with occasional rambles in South Australia, he soon discovered new texts in the book of Nature. One of the earliest pages he turned was labelled, "Hallett's Cove," and it must have been right back in Genesis where he took up the story. Dr. Selwyn and Professor Tate had worked for some time translating its stony speech into modern English, and when Mr. Howchin came along he brought to view more and more interesting matter that needed elucidation. The three scientists read out of the old scratchings on the rocks the details of a period, long before man appeared on the earth, when the Ice King reigned in this State. These Mr. Howchin has since worked up, not in the form of a sermon, but of a most fascinating narrative, that has compelled the attention of scientific men the world over. In a few weeks members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, attracted by its spell, will make a special two days' tour to read the story in Nature's own calligraphy.

—A Landscape Beautiful.—

As we walked from what will shortly be the Hallett's Cove Railway Station to the beach—a matter of a third of a mile—there lay in front of us a panorama of the Gulf of St. Vincent, with picturesque vessels passing to and from Port Adelaide. Behind, and close at hand, were the first low rises of the hills, and underfoot the green of self-sown wheat and kale—token of the use that had been made of the country for stockraising. Soon that will be of the past. The iron horse is to arrive with long trains of passengers before long, and the Arcadian simplicity of verdant meadows will then speedily give place to an array of pretty "water-front" villas. But of that more anon.