

The Register. August 19th 1914

UNIVERSITIES AND THE SCIENCE OF GOVERNMENT.

From the Rev. J. C. Kirby:—"The Rev. F. V. Pratt, M.A., in a recent Sydney paper has drawn attention to a lecture by Mr. R. E. Irvine (Professor of Economics in the University of Sydney) on 'The place of social sciences in a modern university.' In this as a general principle the professor advocates knowledge for the sake of life, for the sake of man. In pursuance of this ideal, he thinks that the universities should give much more heed to the social sciences, so that there may be an understanding of the conditions of social health, comfort, and advance. To this end he would create in the university a Faculty of Political Science, Sociology, Economics, and Public Law. There is now a science of medicine. We have passed in the healing art from the rule of thumb and of unrelated experiences into an understanding of principles. The universities are even starting to give a little real scientific instruction on venereal diseases, so that they may in future be handled on intelligent principles, instead of the ignorant methods of the past. Up to the present the universities have not sought to ascertain a science of government. They have not made a study of human societies organized as States; so that the functions and limitations of State action may be clearly ascertained, and what are the duties of the State to the individual and to subordinate social institutions. The universities do not know and do not teach scientifically a systematised social science, and the members of Parliament, busy making laws and tampering with the body politic in all sorts of ways, have no knowledge of social and political science. The editors of the papers have a general omniscience, but even they come short of a broad, deep, grounded knowledge of social science. Clergymen who know many things and are given to ancient languages, have little acquaintance with social science, which has so vitally to do with the welfare of their flocks. Lawyers, who take such a prominent place in the Parliaments, never pass even a primary examination in political science. Emperors, Kings, middle classes are now being superseded by the democracy, which means that everything is to depend upon the chance multitude. There are some sufficiently mad to believe that the chance multitude understand by an infallible instinct how to govern themselves and other people, and lead the nation to glory. The fact is that we are all in darkness; we lack certified knowledge of social and governmental science. The Saviour said:—"If the blind lead the blind they shall both fall into the ditch." If we are led by a blind democracy then we can be quite certain that this Australian nation will fall plump into the ditch, and be in danger of drowning. We must call our universities to the rescue; they must establish faculties of social and political science, bodies of capable persons who must give themselves to these studies with enthusiasm, so that they may discover a little daylight for the guidance of the democracy, the newspapers, and the politicians. Also the curriculums of the grammar schools and of the lawyers and the clergy should be reconsidered, so that they may give some elemental knowledge of social science and government. Let us, if possible, get a little daylight into our body politic. One set of the blind call themselves by one name and another set by a different name. Let the universities go to work, and in course of time they will create a third party—the enlightened. Now, the people of the United States have realized these things during the last 10 years. They felt themselves suffering horribly from government by blind electors, electing blind representatives, and blind Governors, so lately they have been making tremendous efforts to ascertain social and governmental science. That is one of the reasons why such a powerful wave of opinion has gone against the liquor traffic in the United States. For the students of social science soon discovered that the trade in and consumption of 'booze' is dead against the honour and prosperity of the community. To show the example of America, I quote from an article by Mr. Wallas, on 'Universities and the Nation,' in *The Contemporary Review* for June last, p. 785:—"Mr. Herbert Croly . . . speaks of a new conception of a national "purpose," to be achieved by the deliberate and organized

efforts of those who consciously prefer the national good to their own. In this change of outlook the universities appear both as cause and effect. The modern "elective" system, by which the American student is left almost entirely free to choose his own subjects of study, makes the universities singularly sensitive to outside intellectual developments. The President of one of the great eastern universities showed me the other day an analysis of the courses taken by all his students during the last three years. The old curriculum of classics and mathematics had lost its position. Classics, indeed, had almost disappeared. By far the largest body of students were those who had taken economics as their main study. With those who took "government" (or, as we should call it, "political science") they made up about a third of the whole. If one added the students whose main study was American history, psychology, social ethics, or any other attempt at the scientific analysis of modern human problems, they made up about one-half. . . . The facts, I was told, would be found to be about the same in other great universities. There are roughly 600 universities and colleges in the United States, with 300,000 students and 30,000 professors and teachers. Even if we use the term university to include for our purposes only one-third, it is probably safe to say that between 6,000 and 10,000 students take the Bachelor's degree annually after a training mainly consisting of economics and government, or some other modern sociological course. It would be well within the mark to say that these figures represent at least 30 times the corresponding figures in the United Kingdom.' These students are finding good positions of a governmental nature, and are going into the legislatures, and are superseding the lawyers, or else obliging the lawyers really to study social science. These men are having a profoundly beneficial effect on the legislation of the United States. President Wilson is himself an instance of the new and highly instructed ruler, who acts from science, and not passion, fancy, and guess, or merely to please a multitude of the ignorant. Mr. Wallas says:—'In 1912 Mr. Wilson was elected as a Democrat, and in 1913 he carried through Congress a Currency Bill drafted and amended in accordance with high expert advice. His Bill was, as far as I could judge, accepted by the whole complex interests concerned, as a manifest improvement in the financial system of the nation.' We need enlightenment joined to honest purpose for the nation's good. If any rich man wants to do the highest good for the Australian nation, let him find means for the Faculty of Social Science in Adelaide University."

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Hero of the Antarctic

SIR DODUGLAS MAWSON'S RETURN.

Tall, virile, sunburnt, and vigorous-looking Sir Douglas Mawson appeared at the Grand Central on Saturday afternoon, looking exceedingly glad to reach his adopted city once more.

"Will you tell 'Mail' readers about your trip to England?" ventured the interviewer.

The hero of Antarctic snows tersely answered, "I left within a month of the Aurora's return, in haste to reach England and get my book published. I wished to publish a popular account of the trip. There was a good deal of the overdraft on the expedition to be met, and the proceeds of the book are to go towards defraying that debt. I have had the busiest time of my life. Two large volumes have been finished. The last lot of copy was posted home to England from Suez. We had a wireless message however, to the effect that the publishers had suspended publication during the war crisis. Everything is at a standstill in London."

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CONTINENTAL TRAVEL.

"I gave an official lecture before the Royal Geographical Society in London, and then postponed popular lectures in England till November and December, so that I might return to Sydney for the science congress of the British Association, where I am to speak on 'Past, Present, and Future in the Antarctic.' Those lectures in England I may now have to cancel owing to the war. I arranged to pay a visit to Basle, Switzerland, to meet the parents of one of the members of our expedition, Dr. Metz. He was killed, you remember. I travelled via Amsterdam, and down through the Rhine country along the borders of Alsace and Lorraine. All was quiet there. The German railways were certainly in a most business-like condition. We passed through such cities as Cologne and Metz. They have as many as 15 parallel lines of rails, and open sidings with wide spaces of country, so that great numbers of troops may be instantly deployed. So you see that the German railway system is always in a most thoroughly prepared state in case of war. The Dutch seemed particularly busy. They were fortifying and manoeuvring along their border with extraordinary activity. All their bridges were guarded with entrenchments, and thousands of khaki-clad troops were practising.

"We met an interesting old veteran in the person of Dr. Metz's father. He showed us his case of war medals and his accoutrements. He took part with the French in the Franco-Prussian war, and as matters between Austria and Serbia were a little strained then he seemed to think he would have occasion to use them again."

"WE'RE DOING VERY WELL, AREN'T WE?"

"When we were near Socotra we heard the German ships addressing each other on the wireless in code. They would not answer us when we cut in, and of course we didn't understand them. Wireless from Kurachi, at the mouth of the Indus, warned us while in the Arabian Sea not to put into any German port. Next day war was declared. We had no news on board on account of the censors, and of course everybody was highly excited. Near Colombo the harbour showed up illuminated by night with searchlights from the warships and forts. They took many prizes, including a huge cargo of rice which was very valuable. A Russian munition ship in the harbour was on fire; they suspected Germans of incendiarism, and they had to sink it to save an explosion in the harbour. When I arrived ashore I found the Indians to be very loyal to their Sovereign over the seas. A native Cingalese official met me near the post office, simply bubbling over with the war. Waving his newspaper to me he cried, 'We're doing very well, sir, aren't we? Aren't we doing all right?' I was interested with the emphasis on the 'we.'"

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE.

"Lady Mawson travelled with you all the way, did she not, Sir Douglas?"

"Yes, we are hastening through to Sydney to the sittings of the Science Congress this afternoon. After that I am advertised to give a series of popular lectures throughout Australia. We shall be back in Adelaide for the lectures here on September 7, 8, and 9. I am not looking forward to any more Antarctic expeditions just at present. You see, I have to collate all the scientific data which the last expedition has afforded, and Sir Ernest Shackleton is going southward immediately. He has been hindered ^{greatly} by the war. I am arranging to transfer the good ship Aurora to him at a nominal price for the adventure. Next year I am to take up lectures in a normal way again at the Adelaide University."

"At the beginning of the academic year," put in Mr. Hodge, the registrar of the University, who met Sir Douglas at the mailboat and escorted him about with almost paternal care.

"Good-bye," said Sir Douglas with modest kindness, and immediately turned to busy himself with preparations for departure.