

**THE PASSMAN, HOW
ARE OUR UNIVERSITIES
TO TRAIN CITIZENS?**

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The passman, how are our universities to train citizens? by R. L. Archer

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BY

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1918

PREFACE

By WILLIAM GEORGE

Member of the Council of University College, Bangor; Chairman
of the Carnarvonshire Education Authority.

As this great war is drawing nearer its inevitable end, social reformers are becoming more and more engrossed in plans for the "reconstruction" of society. But what does this "reconstruction" mean? When we speak of the restoration of Belgium, for instance, the mind instantly pictures an army of workers of various kinds, immediately peace is declared, devoting every ounce of energy they possess to the great task of repairing the havoc war has wrought in that devastated land. As far as its physical features are concerned we then see it *in statu quo ante bellum*. But are our ideas regarding the reconstruction of society after the war equally definite and clear? I doubt it. The following inferences may, however, I believe, be fairly drawn from the way in which these words are generally used nowadays: (1) That the terrible convulsions of war have rendered the present structure of society unfit for human habitation. Whether this unfitness is due to inherent defects which the shock of war has simply served to reveal, or to the uncontrollable and altogether unforeseen violence of that shock, these are matters into which we need not stop to inquire. In any event,

it is agreed (2) that for the old building a people's palace in every respect worthier and nobler must be erected.

Translated into plain prose, this means that by common consent the laws and customs by which the people of this country have hitherto been governed must without delay be so altered as to make a good and happy life a possibility reasonably attainable by the masses of the British people. Concurrently with this, the people themselves must be helped in an increasing degree to realize what a good and noble life means in truth and in fact, and their aspirations for the attainment of such an ideal must be stimulated and strengthened in every way possible.

Upon whom is this double duty to devolve? Obviously upon the leaders of the nation in thought and action, and it is just here that Professor Archer's book will be so valuable. It is evident he harbours no illusions that, as soon as peace is declared, the New Era will of its own accord, as it were, begin. On the contrary, he sees clearly that its establishment will take much time and much exercise of thought, and that its subsequent maintenance and progress will demand faith, hope, and charity of the highest; and the plea set forth and developed with such wealth of illustration in this volume, as I read it, is that the — Universities should forthwith take the task in hand of training leaders of men well fitted in mind and heart to take the conduct of this great enterprise. It is assumed—and who can question the fact?—that this is not being done at present. It is also assumed—and I trust that few will be found pessimistic enough to deny the correctness of this assumption—that it *can* be done.

The "Passman," moreover, tells us *how* it should be done, and, doing so, makes a double appeal. The first is to the "Academics," upon whom devolves the duty of framing syllabuses and courses of study for the passman, of guiding him the way he should go along those courses, and afterwards of testing the knowledge he has acquired thereby. The other appeal is to the mixed public, which may be said to be represented by the Councils of Universities and University Colleges with whom the government of these bodies practically rests. If these two classes are converted to the views so lucidly and powerfully expressed in this book, the process of reconstruction will undoubtedly be greatly accelerated and improved.

Speaking as a "non-academic," I may say that it is one of the most hopeful signs of the times that professors like the writer of this work should display the missionary spirit which permeates the pages of this book, in which the author in the fervour of his enlightened zeal searches far and wide for the best means of popularizing knowledge and making the Universities a greater power for good in the life of the average "Pass" student. Time was when it could be said that—

"Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets;
She crieth in the chief place of concourse,
In the opening of the gate;
In the city she uttereth her words."

But that was long ago, before the propagandist spirit had been exorcised from our Universities. There are indications that this spirit is again taking possession of our men of learning, and Professor Archer's book is one of those indications.

Wales, at least, is on the tiptoe of expectation to see her reformed University take a worthy part in the regeneration of the national spirit and the development of the higher life within her, and I feel certain that "Cymru Fydd" (*Wales-that-is-to-be*) will give Professor Archer's book a hearty welcome.

GARTH CELYN,
CRICCIETH,
February 23, 1918.