

Sep 4th 1896

THE HOSPITAL HONORARY MEDICAL STAFF.

—This week's *Government Gazette* contains a notice of the appointment of Archibald Watson, M.D., F.R.C.S., Elder Professor of Anatomy, as Honorary Consulting Surgeon on the Hon. Medical Staff of the Adelaide Hospital. A representative of the *Register* waited on the Professor at his residence on Thursday evening, and showed him a cutting from the *Gazette* containing the notice. This was the first the Professor had seen of the notification, he confessed, and as he was, to use his own words, "suffering from a severe angeio neurotic condition of mental depression" there did not seem to the reporter much prospect of gaining information from him. Professor Watson, however, in reply to questions stated that he had reasons for changing his position in the matter, and that what he had done had been done entirely in the interests of humanity and of his students. He further said—"When I refused the appointment I was under the impression that I would still be able to guide in some measure the Hospital education of my own students, but when I found that without a *locus standi* I would be unable to continue my services, except in a very perfunctory manner, in the education of students for whom I have always had a sincere affection, which I hope is reciprocated, I gave way, and offered the Government my services in the position to which I have been gazetted." The Professor is very sanguine that much good will result for the Medical School from the conference to be shortly held between the University Council and the Hospital Board, and that all troubles will be smoothed away and all will go well. In view of this approaching conference the Professor did not care to say more on the subject. When a query was put to him as to the "new doctors," as they are termed, the Professor replied:—"Well, that is a very delicate question. The mere sight of Mr. Ramsay Smith disarms resentment, and Dr. Napier moves in a different plane, and revolves in an orbit of his own. He cannot be judged by the ordinary colonial standard, for he is as far above our colonial standard as Trilby was above the commonplace artists of her time. His appearance shows that he was born to command. The 'rapt attention' with which the students—more especially the lady students—listen to his clinical lectures has pleased him very much, and he has also expressed himself to me as exceedingly pleased with the gentlemanly conduct of the house surgeons and the senior students."

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The Board of Management of the Adelaide Hospital are naturally disappointed at the turn which things have taken in connection with the proposed appointment of Professor Watson. The eagerness with which they grasped at the suggestion that that gentleman should receive the title of "Honorary Consulting Surgeon" to the institution bears striking testimony to their conviction that the Honorary Staff badly requires strengthening. It is, of course, greatly to their credit that they should desire to make the medical machinery of the Hospital as efficient as possible, and it is undeniable that the accession to the ranks of the recognised medical officers of so highly qualified a surgeon as Professor Watson would have been an important point gained; but there is another side to the question. In their chagrin at the miscarriage of the attempt to bring about the projected arrangement two or three of the members of the Board on Friday indulged in very strong language at the expense of the Medical Association. In this, it seems to us, they were decidedly unreasonable. The present Board took office with the full knowledge that the great majority of the medical profession and the Government were at daggers drawn in regard to Hospital affairs. No doubt at first they cherished the hope that they would be able to effect a compromise, but it was not long before this was seen to be impossible. The late Honorary Staff, supported by most of their brethren of the healing art, declined to give way upon a question which in their opinion was of vital moment to the effective management of the institution, and paid the penalty by being compelled to abandon their duties. Thenceforward the Board by continuing at their post became committed to the policy of the Ministry and to the consequences it involved. They knew that while things remained

as they were they could not look for the co-operation of the profession at large, or for any help from it in alleviating the difficulties of the position. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that the influence of the Medical Association should have been exerted in the direction of preventing one of its number, for whom it had a high respect, from taking a step which would inevitably have estranged him from his fellow-members.