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PROFESSOR WATSON.

AN INTERESTING CHAT.

MAINLY CONCERNING PEOPLE.

SOUTH AUSTRALIANS AT THE FRONT.

SYDNEY, May 1.

Professor Watson, of Adelaide, who returned from South Africa with the Second South Australian Contingent in the steamer Tongariro, has been a keen observer of incidents, and narrates many interesting facts, but unfortunately while he tells some stirring stories, and paints some lurid scenes to the private ear, he considers that his position as special service officer in the medical branch precludes him from making them public. He would, however, speak to-day of Mr. Reade and Mr. "Karri" Davis, both of South Australia, and of Capt. J. F. M. Wilkinson, of New South Wales, and his language when applied to them glowed with eulogy. Mr. Reade, he said, was the only Australian major who never had a man shot under him, but that was his peculiar fortune. His men were away at the front—they were at the front of the Guards one time—yet seemed to bear charmed lives, for though the Guards fell the South Australians came through unscathed.

The professor's admiration for Mr. "Karri" Davis is unbounded. The First Imperial Light Horse, formed by Mr. Davis and Mr. Woolls Samson, men whose loyalty was emphasized by their personal desire for revenge against the race which had so long been hostile to England, are, he is sure, the best soldiers in the world. "Don't you know," he remarked, "that Australians wanted three additional qualities to make them the best soldiers on the African field, namely acquaintance with the country, acclimatization, and familiarity with the Dutch and Kaffir languages? The I.H.L. had those qualities, and, as they were mostly Australians, possessed all the other good parts of the Australian Bushman soldier. Then, in addition, they had something more than loyalty running in their veins, something which heated their patriotism and impelled them to fight fiercely and to the bitter end—they had the inspiration of the vendetta to urge them forward, and they fought so well that no men ever fought better."

Professor Watson went out as special service officer on the suggestion of Col. Gordon, Military Commandant in South Australia. He carried with him letters from Lord Tennyson and Sir Samuel Way to Sir Arthur Milner, High Commissioner of South Africa, and Mr. Hely Hutensin, Governor of Natal. When he landed in Durban he was sent to Maritzburg in time to meet the wounded from Valkranz. His proffered services to assist in their treatment were gladly availed of, and after three weeks he was appointed casualty surgeon to the Natal field forces, as Mr. Tree (surgeon to the Duke of York) and Sir William McCormick (surgeon to the Queen) were about to return home. In his new capacity Professor Watson worked in with Sir William Stokes (surgeon in Ireland to the Queen) and with Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, of Victoria. When the former died and the latter returned to Melbourne he was left alone on the lines of communication. Of course, the Professor's work always being at the base hospital his duty never took him up to the firing line. He saw all the hospitals from the coast to Majuba Hill, and when his year of special service expired he visited Johannesburg and Pretoria. At Koomati Poort he met Lieut. Way, who was in charge of a battery. On speaking to the English colonel in command he learnt that the lieutenant was regarded as the most efficient subaltern on the station. During his visit to Ladysmith Professor Watson was seized with an attack of dysentery. His health, which until then, had been robust, commenced to fail him, and now it will take a couple of months of Australian air and conditions to reinstate him physically.

Before concluding his interesting chat Professor Watson mentioned that his experience had kept him almost entirely with the British soldiers, and in his opinion Tommy was the bravest man on earth; it was not his fault that he was not the wisest. His travels had enabled him to meet one South Australian whose career he was particularly pleased to find had been successful. That was Sister Mary, of the South Australian nursing staff. She was resplendent in khaki uniform, adorned with many officers' badges and presentation brooches, "and," added the professor, with a sigh, "I don't think she will come back to South Australia." He also met Col. Heath, A.A.G. to Gen. Wolfe Murray, general on the lines of communication. Col. Heath is a son-in-law of Mrs. Baker, of Morialta, South Australia. The professor wished, in conclusion, to publicly acknowledge the uniform courtesy of the treatment extended to him by Surg-Gen. Wilson, P.M.O.'s Galway and Johnston, and many other surgeons with whom he came in contact. The working surgeons, too, deserve he thinks, high praise for their tireless and loyal work for the army.

"THE MUSEFUL MOPINGS OF A MUSICAL MANIAC."

To the Editor.

Sir—I stood on the Cliff of the World in a blue funk. I do not know, I cannot tell, whether I was in a transcendently colossal frame of mind, or in a state of hyperbolic exaltation (it may have been the pickled lobster the previous night), but, nevertheless, I stood in a cloud of rose-coloured smoke—no! I mean in a blue funk! The exact geographical position of the Cliff of the World has not, to date heretofore, transpired; and, unluckily, when I was there I was so utterly and intensely interested in the epochal and reverberating Void, so full of phantasmagorical imaginings and the magnificent intensity of things, that I felt most exquisitely infinite, and was unable to make any geographical observations. The overwhelming and cataclysmic roar grew more frightful; I thought I was a cosmogonist—but the vision faded, the thin mist, with its tinted, steamy volutes, flittered away like the sound of falling waters. Then I straightway pulled down mine own History of Music off the shelf, when, ye gods! the interstellar Milky Way got in the way, and for a short moment I was unable to copy out a list of dead and gone musicians. But the rattle of Handel's halibones on my pate brought me back to earth, and I managed to work round to Wagner through a sea of Sphinxes, Androgyns, and all kinds of commonplace articles. I get like this pretty often—feel deeply oppressed with the lamentable compulsion of having to muse, but as I have a Dictionary, a History of Music, and a few books on mysticism and mythology I can muse quite easily and artistically—can fly into the Seventh Heaven of Balderdash with the greatest ease. I am generally rather incoherent, too; but that matters not—one must be so to be expressive. And to any critics who come to chill and to smirch the work of the blessed few I say, "By Jove, I made it, and it is mine!" So I generally get along all right in a condition of ecstatic felicity amid blissful semi-chaotic imaginings.

I am, Sir, &c.,
ANTI-HUMBUG.

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20192-76
Reg 14th May 1901

"THE MUSEFUL MOPINGS OF A MUSICAL MANIAC."

To the Editor.

Sir—My sublime and vaporous Musings have been suddenly arrested by the discordant braying of one "Bohemian," who holds forth under the heading "Musings of the Muse" somewhat after this style:—"I fall down at the feet of the Most Noble Grand Incoherent Drivelling Musier, and worship him and his insane Moonshine, while you are an envious groveller, who understands not his inexpressible, indefinable, and incommunicable twaddle, which has at least given you some moments of thought." (Yes! I spent four and a half hours endeavouring to discover the drift of "Bohemian's" letter, as well as that of the "Musings.") "But which I understand; for I, too, have been high on the Cliff of the World, and have seen far into the perspective of possibilities, and am now grovelling to gain the summit of the highest cliff, where o'er the Void that stretches to the Far, Far Distance (a few capitals here, Mr. Printer) our Souls go out to beautify the Realm of Human Life." This magnificent and scathing oration penetrated every fibre of my being, and I felt that I was near the core of Existence, and wondered at the whirrings of the Infinite. But my attention was diverted by the moaning—the awful, heartrending moaning of the mud for recognition. (I'm not quite clear as to how the mud got up into the ethereal region I then condescendingly inhabited, nor what it wanted recognised.) Thereupon I imposingly bent my stern glance below, and in a fearful voice exclaimed, "O, Bohemian, dost thou (nay! I mean the mud) mean for recognition? Hast thou not the rapture and beatitude of perusing miles of my inexpressible and wishy-washy jargon? Dost thou wish to be a second Supreme Art Vapourer? Sooth to say, I think it impossible; but (thou hast a dictionary, too, as is evidenced by thy meaningless letter), if thou canst pour forth floods of vagueness; if thou canst enter upon a sea of glittering metaphors (which goodness knows when a full stop will arrest), and get them well mixed; if thou canst use Archaic, Aeneidic, and Ariel-like words and recondite phrases; if thou canst enlarge till Bull's-Neck in flowing, albeit somewhat sense-bewildered, language on absolutely nothing, ether, gas; if thou canst indulge in polysyllabic conceits; if thou canst develop a swelled head (provided thy hat be not already too small for same); and if thou canst discriminate between the hamadryadical and Meophetophelian pigwidgeon Mumbo-Jumbo and the pyrrhonic, mundane, and hyllotheistic Gymnosophists; then—I say THEN (capitals, please)—thou wilt have a SOUL (more capitals, please)—thou shalt the divine Muse fall upon thee, and thy intellect, thy Mind (large M) will be in such a complicated state that"—I have lost my place; the polysyllabic character of my fervour has somewhat mixed me, and where or what my original nominative was, alas! I wot not. But, never mind; with curling lip I watch "Bohemian" grovelling far below, and I drop into verse for a change—

To all who cavil at flowery trash,
Which I write by the yard when I feel too-tan,
Who haven't the SOUL to make a dash,
And a jumble of words, I ejaculate "Shoo!"
I am, Sir, &c.,
ANTI-RUMBUG.

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The primary examination in the theory and practice of music at the University will be held next month. For the theory test 121 entries have been received, and for the practice of music 271. This is an increase of nearly 100 entries on last year's numbers.