

PERSONAL NOTES FROM LONDON.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

LONDON, January 23.

Colonel Willoughby Wallace, commander of the King's Colonials is about to enter into the state matrimonial with Mrs A. M. Hodgson, widow of Mr Hodgson, J.P., of Bishopstoke, Hampshire, of which county the Colonel is now a J.P.

Dr. Ovenden (Christchurch), who has been attending at University College Hospital the last three months, has found himself so unable to stand the London winter that he has taken his passage back to Lyttelton by a steamer sailing early in April. Dr. Ovenden has been down with a touch of bronchitis, but expects soon to be about again.

Major-General E. Harding Steward, who has at times acted as Inspector of Warlike Stores for the Colonies, and, I understand, holds that appointment in connection with New Zealand, is going through the Bankruptcy Court at Brighton. His accounts have not yet been filed, and the details of his debts and assets remain undisclosed. It appears that he left the Army in 1883, and commuted his pension for some £6,500. He put most of the money into debentures of a sugar beet business, which was really killed by the bounties. As Inspector of warlike stores to various colonies, the fees he received had amounted to as much as £1,900 in one year, but the amount varied greatly, and last year he received some £300 only. The Major-General who estimated that if all his assets were realised there would be a surplus of £500 over liabilities, got into financial difficulties through financing two friends, one of them having "Tube" railway option which may prove valuable later on.

Father Hays, of Holroyd Rectory, Market Rasen, Lincolnshire, has issued a denial of the report that the Appeal to Catholics, bearing his signature, and issued on the eve of the recent general election in New Zealand, was a "gez up" on the part of the Temperance Party. He says that the drink question entering prominently into the election, the appeal was in its entirety written by him at the earnest request of the temperance people, and was by them published in the colonial newspapers and extensively circulated in other ways.

How may the Antipodean medical fraternity hide their diminished health. Mr Alfred Ashworth, whose affairs were examined at the Edmonton Bankruptcy Court last Tuesday, stated that while playing cricket in Australia he had a sunstroke, which caused locomotor ataxia. For three years he could not put his feet to the ground. He underwent a variety of treatments to be cured. He went to doctors and to private hospitals. He visited New Zealand, South Africa, and China, and the Chinese doctors put him on his feet again. He estimated that he expended £19,669 in finding a remedy.

The battleship New Zealand which was laid down at Portsmouth last Friday (ominous this) on the ship from which the Suffolk was launched on the previous day, is a vessel of 16,500 tons displacement, belonging to the "King Edward VII. class," and, on her completion, will be one of the most powerful battleships in the world. Her chief dimensions are: Length 400ft., breadth 78ft., and draught 26ft. The main armament is extremely heavy, consisting of four 12-inch guns mounted fore and aft in 12-inch barbettes; and also, in addition to these, four 9.2-inch guns in 7-inch turrets, one at each corner of the superstructure. A secondary battery of ten 6-inch guns, in a 7-inch box battery amidships, five on either broadside, together with eighteen 3-inch and six machine guns, combine to make her a worthy opponent of any other warship in the world. A 9-inch belt, tapering to three inches fore and aft, is her main protection, the hull also being divided up by 12-inch bulkheads covered with a 14-inch deck. Her horse-power will be 18,000, giving her a speed of 18½ knots, and she will carry a large coal supply of 2,600 tons. Another feature of this class is the abolition of the fighting-tops, each mast carrying nothing but the search-light top.

Something like a record in the discharge of New Zealand cargoes has been put up by the New Zealand Shipping Co.'s Tougararo. This vessel had six days only to turn round in London. She got alongside her discharging berth at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, the 13th inst., with a full cargo. She finished her discharge at 5 p.m. on Monday last, the 19th inst., as well as having taken in 800 tons of coal. She only worked one gang right through one night; on other nights work ceased at 10 p.m. The weight of the cargo is not ascertainable, but the vessel's capacity is 12,200 tons of 70 cubic feet, and, as already stated, she was full. Even in the port of London good work is occasionally accomplished.

The other night I gained an insight into some of the experiences that a medical student from the colonies has to go through in the course of his work in London. Asking at "Barts," otherwise St. Bartholomew's Hospital, for a young New Zealander, I was told to go over to "Mackenzies" in Cloth Fair, where he was doing a month's midwifery duty. Cloth Fair is one of the very few remaining examples of what all old London streets used to be like before the great fire of 1666. This little corner of the city escaped being swept away, and there it still stands, a dark lane barely ten feet wide and over-hung by the projecting upper storeys of its old weatherboard houses. Even the entrance to it from Smithfield, within a few feet of "Barts," is under an old archway. "Mackenzies" is one of these old wooden houses just within the archway, and in the fine-pannelled old room on the first floor I found the students' common-room and two young New Zealanders amongst them. One of them, a son of a well-known "Old Identity" of South Canterbury, the other a son of a former Inspector of Mines. We were soon comparing the closeness of their strange old quarters with the air and space and sunlight that they had been accustomed to in New Zealand, and one of them confessed that he could hardly hold out the first six months that he had had to live "in College" at "Barts." The quarters in Cloth Fair were still worse and more close, and what would happen in case of fire he did not like to think. The month's experience was, however, but short and was of incalculable value. Each student has sole charge of as many midwifery cases in the surrounding slums as he can possibly attend to; he is called out in urgent haste at all times of the day and night, and can never leave the place for a moment without marking up on a board where he may with certainty be found. Only in the most critical cases, well defined by printed rules, must he send an urgent messenger to the head of his department, and self-reliance and quick judgment are soon learned.

It would be impossible to put into print details of the horrors that a student at this stage has to harden himself to. The filth, vermin, and utter degradation of the class he attends in their own squalid dwellings—sometimes nothing but one-roomed "flats"—would be almost incredible to the most unfortunate inhabitant of any colony of the Empire.

It so happened that that night whilst I was at "Mackenzies" hearing some of these experiences, the hard frost had suddenly ended, and the drizzle, as it fell, was frozen into ice upon the pavements, and the most active man could hardly keep upright on his legs. It proved to be a "record" night for accidents at all the hospitals in London, and the house-surgeons and their assistants were hard at work all night. News came over to "Mackenzies" that no less than seven cases of broken wrist, "Colles' fracture," they called it, had been brought into the hospital across the way within an hour; then there was a rush across to the hospital by such of "Mackenzies' men as could risk a few minutes away, and I had to take my departure.

The Right Hon. Charles Cameron Kingston has, according to the Melbourne correspondent of the London "Daily Chronicle," brought "a serious charge of legislative plagiarism" against the Hon. W. P. Reeves, Agent-General for New Zealand. The Melbourne scribe continues: "It is asserted that Mr Reeves has, through his own articles and through Mr Lloyd's little book, 'A Country Without Strikes,' allowed the world to believe that he was the author of the Compulsory Arbitration Act of 1892, whereas it

is claimed that that measure is in essence and in verbiage a replica of the Arbitration Bill, which was compiled by the Right Hon. C. C. Kingston, in 1890, and introduced by him into the South Australian House of Assembly on December 12 of the year named. . . . Mr Kingston has, by means of parallel extracts from his own Bill of 1890 and Mr Pember Reeves' Act of 1892 built up a very strong case against the New Zealander, who certainly seems to have incorporated en bloc all that is vital to his own Bill from the South Australian measure. This legislative revelation has generated a mild sensation in the Australian political world. As Mr Kingston is at present drafting the law for the settlement of all labour disputes in Australia which extend beyond the limits of a single State he is naturally anxious to make it clear that he is the real father of the compulsory arbitration system as applied to industrial warfare."

Mr Reeves is now slithering in his shoes, wondering what fearful fate will overtake him. To mitigate the penalty attached to legislative plagiarism (his offence is more than ten years old and he will of course set up the Statute of Limitations in defence), he pleads that he long ago acknowledged publicly his indebtedness to Mr Kingston's measure and made no secret of the fact that his own Bill was Kingston's Act remodelled. As Mr Reeves remarked the other day, he had seen the faults in Mr Kingston's Bill and had corrected them, with the result that his compulsory arbitration measure was the first to meet with success.

Possibly the "explanation" of New Zealand's Agent-General will not soften Mr Kingston's heart towards him. In effect he says to South Australia's ex-Premier: "Your Bill contained a good idea but it was full of imperfections, and to me belongs the honour of having turned a good idea to account." Possibly if the two contestants for the honour of fathering compulsory arbitration are pleased to continue the controversy they will discover by and bye that the idea of compelling employers and workmen to submit their quarrels to an independent tribunal and abide by its decision was put into practice in the days of King Solomon or even earlier. King Solomon certainly adopted a form of compulsory arbitration when he settled the quarrel between two ladies as to the parentage of a certain child.

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