

The Register April 24th 15

—At the Royal College.—

"But it was no dream? You worked hard?"—"Worked? Rather! It was the very best way I could express myself to those gentlemen who 'found' me; the best way I could repay the Serena Trust, which stood behind me to give me a career; and the only way I could respond to those wonderful folk, the Waite family, who have been for six years more than I would dare to tell you. Yes, I did try my best! I had the finest tutors in every phase of my studies, not forgetting Sir Hubert Parry himself, who always watched over me."

—An A.R.C.M.—

"And he, by-the-way, told you what he thought of you by tacking on a further year to your scholastic period?"—"Yes, but you will not be interested in the humdrum of my training. I went through my three years as an Elder Scholar, was given another year, and might have had from the college a still further period but that it appeared time to move out. You see, I had passed through all the requisite five grades of the course, and had gained my A.R.C.M. diploma. So I crossed over to the Continent for finishing study."

—With the Opera Masters.—

"And your thoughts turned to opera?"—"They were turned for me. My Royal College masters had told me I had temperament and the type of voice. And when I had placed myself in the hands of tutors in Cologne they were so kind as to be enthusiastic of my prospects in grand opera. I had the good fortune—the romantic business again, you see—to win the warm interest of an eminent operatic conductor. He and his wife took me under their wing in Cologne. They taught me the contralto roles of a number of the greatest works; they introduced me to the histrionic side of it, too. Imagine my fortune! There was the conductor of the Cologne Opera House, sitting at his own piano, putting me through every line of my paces, while his cultured wife—herself a teacher—stood watch and ward over all I sang and did. They even completed arrangements for my operatic debut. It was to have been made under rather important auspices last September. But, alas! The curtain of war fell upon all Europe. And there was no place like home—my own dear, lovely South Australian homeland."

—Singing to Melba.—

"And now comes a new chapter in the romance?"—"Oh, yes, you know all about Melba—that marvellous Melba! She was staying at Government House, here, a few months ago. I had no idea I was to meet her. But I received a wire. I was to go to Government House and sing to her. I went, and she just said to me, 'Don't tell me anything. I know all about you. Sing!' So I sang my 'hardest.' You know what I mean. Then Melba pulled me on to my feet and said, 'You are coming over to my home with me.' I was bewildered. Anyhow, there I was, over in her own delightful little home, 'Coombe Cottage,' which goes to make up—with the help of a store and a blacksmith's shop—the township of Goldstream, next door to Lilydale. I feel

I cannot tell you much of those six weeks spent as the guest of Melba. They must colour my whole life. I learned; I absorbed things that would never have been gained, I suppose, in a lifetime. I sang with her at Bendigo and Ballarat, and I was to have sung with her at her farewell patriotic concert in Melbourne. But that had to be postponed. It occurred last night, and I have just heard that it was a record success. Melba would not let me go over to Melbourne for it. She has a way of saying things. It was like that when she gave me hints during those six weeks. Her sentences were brief. She would say them in a crisp, significant way, and would add, 'Don't forget that; I shan't tell you again.' Oh, no; I wouldn't forget. I tried to write them in my mind and voice as she spoke them, but—to take no risks—I ran away and scribbled them down, in my own room, quick! I was telling you, Madame would not let me go over to Melbourne. She said, 'Stop in Adelaide. You might catch cold going back on the train, and then good-bye to your debut in your home

Register April 29. 15

UNIVERSITY REGISTRAR ARRESTED

WELLINGTON, April 28.

Bark Lay Hector, Registrar of the New Zealand University, was arrested at Wellington to-day on a charge of the embezzlement of more than £1,000 from the University funds.

The Register
Albany, N.Y. June 1915.

A HORRIBLE DEATH.

What Chlorine Means.

Most Painful Suffocation.

With the object of gleaning general information concerning the effects of chlorine, or other gases, upon the field of battle, a reporter had a chat on Wednesday with Professor E. H. Rennie, M.A., D.Sc., of the University of Adelaide.

—Possible Recent Discovery.—

"Yes," he said, in reply to questions, "I think there is no doubt that it is chlorine which is being used by the Germans. It is difficult, of course, at this distance, to understand just how it is being applied. I can hardly understand how the gas is remaining upon desired spots. The press tells us that it is being sent down upon the trenches, but it seems difficult to believe that it is not quickly diluted in the atmosphere, and spread over so large an area that it cannot be effective. If there were no wind, it would have been easier to explain, but, with the wind, I should think that the gas would be spread largely. I, therefore, suspect that the Germans have some other gas with the chlorine, which prevents it from dispersing quickly, and makes it concentrate better at a desired place. The enemy very likely have been making special investigations for some time back, and at last discovered something which will make the chlorine heavier, and less likely to thin out in the atmosphere. Then, again, the gas may be used in such large quantities that it does accumulate in a manner which confuses the troops; but, without knowing the ground and the conditions, it is difficult even to guess just what is being done. No, I cannot imagine what other gas may have been used."

—Possible Preventives.—

Discussing the effects of the poisonous gases the professor stated that it produced a horrible suffocation. "If one gets a moderate dose," he said, "it produces all the symptoms of a bad cold for hours afterwards. The mouth, the nose, and the eyes are affected by even a slight puff in the face, and it makes the eyes bloodshot. I have known a young student after having accidentally received a puff, to be accused of drinking. It is the severe dose, of course, that produces suffocation. There is a serious inflammation of the throat, and the lungs, and finally death. It would be a terrible end. The victim would feel as if he were inhaling flame, for the throat and the lungs would be badly irritated. Soldiers charging, or running at all, would naturally breathe in much more of the stuff than a stationary man, and the effect upon them, consequently, would be worse."

"It is, then, by no means a method of rendering a man hors de combat by making him insensible instead of killing him?" asked the pressman. "Oh, my word, no," was the reply. "One could never imagine the Germans introducing anything that would make war more humane."

"And a preventive?"—"I was trying to think what could be used as a preventive. The best method, of course, would be to send a strong draught towards the gases, and so drive them off like that, but that would be impossible upon the battlefield."

"They might use miners' masks?"—"Yes, certainly they might have a tight mask for special cases, with a certain supply of fresh air, to be breathed during short dashes, but it would be hardly possible to supply anything that would be a good preventive for a length of time."

"Are there no neutralizing gases?"—"I don't think there are any that would neutralize chlorine sufficiently for practical purposes. There are certain absorbers that could be used with good results. It is possible to absorb the chlorine by various things, such as caustic soda, but the process would be so slow that it would be hardly of practical use. I don't think anything else would be helpful. The soldier might, also, be directed to use, as a mask, material soaked in water. Cotton wool might be effective with caustic soda, but even that would hardly stop the gases if they are as dense as has been described. It would help, however, for special occasions, and short dashes."

—Method of Preparation.—

Alluding to the probable manner in which the Germans would bring the gases upon the field, Professor Rennie said that probably the chlorine would be liquified and under pressure. Then it could be sent up from the generators in pipes, as has been described in the cable messages, or be used to partially fill shells which, on bursting, would release it near the forces against which it was aimed. Probably the gas was generated some distance from the firing lines, and placed in cylinders such as are used in all laboratories. The professor showed a reporter a cylinder full of oxygen. The gas had been forced into the receptacle, and placed within a small compass by great pressure. It was mentioned that possibly the Germans were using bromine, which is like chlorine, but much worse in its effects and much dearer. The feature of bromine is that it is red, not yellow. The greater percentage of bromine used in Australia formerly came from Germany. It cost 3/ or 4/ a lb. there, and, owing to its dangerous nature, about double the price in the Commonwealth. Chlorine, however, is produced cheaply.

—Must Not Follow Suit.—

"You are convinced then, professor," said a reporter, "that the use of these gases in modern battles is entirely unfair?"—

"Certainly I am," was the reply.

"You should experience the effects of them in the laboratory for a while, and you would say so too," remarked Dr. Cook (the lecturer in chemistry), who was present.

"And you don't think the Allies should use the same weapons?" continued the reporter to the professor.

"Decidedly not. If we use these things, which the rules of war say should be left alone, then we can make no complaint against the other side, and they always have the excuse, 'You did the same.' If we keep our hands clean, however, the cause of the Allies will be the one with which the world is in sympathy."

"It will be hard, however, to meet these tactics?"—"Certainly it will, very hard; but means will be devised."