



THE
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
DEAF
MONTHLY NEWS.

VOL. IV.—No. 7.

MARCH, 1909.

PRICE, ONE PENNY.

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PROMINENT DEAF-MUTES AND WORKERS OF AUSTRALIA.

“BY UNITY.”

No. 2. — MR. S. W. SHOWELL.



WITH some trepidation I set out one warm evening with the purpose of interviewing Mr. S. W. Showell, the esteemed head of the Queensland Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission. When I reached "Tenandra," Mr. Showell's pretty home, on the side of Highgate Hill, I found that the good man had gone out for a little, but Mrs. Showell assured me he would be back very shortly, and

he was; but so hot and tired that, with the intuition of my sex, I waited until he had cooled down and got his pipe under way before I explained the object of my visit; as soon after that as he had recovered from the shock, he settled back in his chair and said, with an air of resignation, "Well, fire away then." It was now my turn to be taken aback, and I protested, "But I don't know how to begin; I did not

expect to have to ask questions." Mr. Showell laughed. "Nice sort of interviewer you will make if you don't ask questions; but I will tell you all I know about myself, and you can tell the *S.A. Deaf Monthly News* all you know about me.

"I was born at Great Burden, Durham, England, near the terminus of the first railway ever made in England—on the 3rd June." Here I interposed, "Were you born on the same day as the Prince of Wales? or was he born on your birthday? or were you born on his?" Mr. Showell replied, "As to that, I have the advantage of His Royal Highness." "Then he was born on your birthday?" "No, I was born on his—the advantage lies in being younger, you see."

"I attended a private school until I was eight years of age, when I lost my hearing through an attack of scarlet fever. I was baptized by the Rev. Alexander McLaren, the oldest minister of the Baptist denomination now living; at the age of ten I attended the Deaf School, Old Trafford, Manchester, under the head master, A. Patterson, an honored member of the deaf teaching profession. His son, Colville Paterson, was my teacher, and afterwards took his father's place. The oral system was introduced into the Manchester school in my time, and I was in the pure oral class under Walter McCandlish, now Head Master at Hull Institution.

"I spent two years at this school and then went to Colwyn Bay High School at the age of twelve, under Elias Owen, ex-teacher of Liverpool school for the Deaf. I also studied oralism under Miss Newth, and it was not her fault that I did not become a first-class oralist. I went to Birmingham at the age of seventeen and studied in the Municipal Schools of Art. Two and a half years later, I went into the stained glass business; but I gave it up after a few months."

"Why did you give it up?" I asked; "it seems to me a very interesting occupation, and one that gives scope for an artistic temperament."

"It is that" he replied; "but the pay is very low, and I did not like the men I had to work with. I did not realize then that we cannot avoid contact with evil in our daily associations, and they shocked me rather. I was more used to drawing rooms than to workshops in those days.

"I returned to the Birmingham Art Schools, and finished a three years' course. About this time my father died, and I returned home where my brother was trying to make horticulture and poultry raising pay. I divided my time between helping him to try, and studying art on my own.

"About this time I met the Rev. W. F. Gilby, now missionary to the Deaf in connection with St. Saviour's, Southwark, who was visiting Colwyn Bay, and he recommended me to try for a post at Cardiff School for the Deaf, under Mrs. Melville. I was first assistant teacher there, Mr. Glynne second. We had another assistant later in the person of Abdullah James Ydlibi, the subsequent founder and present Superintendent of the Deaf and Dumb School. Cairo, Egypt.

"My brother did not succeed in his efforts to make horticulture pay in England, and emigrated to South Australia. I came across an advertisement inserted in the *British Deaf Monthly*, by Mr. S. Johnson, for a Missionary for the Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission of South Australia. I applied at once, and my brother, who had in the meantime landed in Adelaide, saw Mr. Johnson for me; but the Deaf Mutes of Adelaide preferred to have a local man, and Mr. E. Salas was appointed. Mr. Johnson then sent my letter of application to Mr. S. Watson, in Sydney, who replied that there was no opening for a missionary there.

"I stayed on at Cardiff School but got rather restless and unsettled. By this time I was engaged to be married and I could see no prospect of earning enough for two in the teaching profession; also my family were on the point of emigrating to Australia, and I made up my mind, rather in a hurry, to come, too. I joined my brother who was growing fruit at Renmark, S.A. Married Miss L. Peake, of Birmingham, and after some years divided between farming and collecting for the South Australian Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission, I was advised that there was an opening for a missionary to the deaf in Brisbane, so I burned my boats behind me and came, and you know the rest."

And Mr. Showell sat back in his chair with an air of contentment as of duty done.

Yes! I know the rest, none better. The offer made to the Provisional Committee of the newly started Mission to at least collect his own salary and expenses; the slow and gradual beginnings; the getting together of a home for wife and child; the thousand and one difficulties in the way of the man who starts out, almost single-handed, to build up a Mission for the deaf; the murmurings and discontent of the deaf themselves, who could each and all manage the Mission better (if they had their way) than the man who is doing it. Wonderful progress has been made in those few years, and it is all practically one man's unselfish work.

Not by any means what the world calls a leader of men, he yet does not lack the essential qualities that go to the making of a missionary to the deaf—and those who know the deaf-mute as he is, know how many-sided a successful missionary has to be.

A comrade, rather than a preacher (except when he is in the pulpit) he shares our work and gives us good advice, when we ask for it only. He is the Hon. Sec. of the Deaf-Mute C.C., and also of the Queensland branch of the A.D.D.A. Playwright and instructor to the Dramatic Club, and President of the Mutual Improvement Society. He writes the Monthly Circular all himself, and occasionally indulges in writing limericks. He once had to take a lady of his congregation to the dentist, but even that did not disconcert him

He is blessed with a keen sense of humour, which has helped him out of many an awkward fix, and he has also a very happy way of looking always for the sunny side of things. He suits Brisbane very well, and we trust to have him among us many years.

NEW SOUTH WALES.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Personal Pars.

There always seems to be a fair number of weddings about Easter time, and two of our members are about to add one more to the list, for Mr. Reggie Landsdowne is to be married to Miss Lizzie McMuller on April 3rd. We all wish them much real happiness in the future.

Mr. Brooker, of Davis Creek, has been in Sydney for the past three weeks, and enjoyed meeting his old school friends again, a pleasure that was mutual.

Mr. Reggie Brennan of Sydney, spent a very enjoyable two weeks' holiday at Orange and Bathurst. He got some good shooting while there, and did a lot of good walking. He is much better for the holiday.

Miss Saunders is at present away on a holiday trip to Brisbane, Queensland.

Annual Picnic.

The Annual Picnic for the the Deaf Adults was held on March 6th. at the usual place, Watson's Bay. This social gathering has become a special one of the year ; it is a re-union of former scholars, many of whom have now little ones of their own to bring with them. The weather was all one could wish, and by the afternoon quite a large number had gathered together. It was intended that a photo of the gathering should be taken, but when all were assembled and nearly ready, a strong wind blew over the camera, damaging it badly to our great regret, so the photograph had to be abandoned. The Lighthouse, which is a fine one, is at the point of Watson's Bay, and some of the party paid it a visit, while others amused themselves with games, etc. Part of the picturesque spot is reserved for fortifications and the public are not allowed there at all. After a very enjoyable day the picnickers left by the steamer at 7 p.m., reaching Sydney before 8 p.m., and feeling all the better for the friendly re-union and chit-chat with playmates of by-gone years.

QUEENSLAND.

[FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.]

Mission Committee Meeting.

THE Committee of the Queensland Adult Deaf and Dumb Mission held its quarterly meeting on March 4th. There were present Mr. Dickson (in the chair), Mesdames Clark and Bryan, Miss Wilson, and Messrs. Barton and Weedon. The balance-sheet for the quarter was read and adopted ; date of Annual meeting fixed for Thursday evening, 25th March, in the Mission room.

This is a welcome departure from the custom of holding annual meetings in the afternoon, when the deaf and dumb, as well as many subscribers, are engaged in their business and cannot attend.

The sixth Annual Report is a very encouraging one indeed.

Mutual Improvement Society.

This society of budding debaters held its postponed fortnightly meeting on Saturday