

## RUSSIA AND AUSTRALIA.

### Closer Relationship Desired.

[By a Special Reporter.]

Few men of the same age have had as many and as varied experiences as those which have befallen Capt. M. Klatchko, a Russian doctor, who arrived in Adelaide from Melbourne on Wednesday morning. Although in only his thirtieth year, he has already visited about every country in the world, and has been through three wars. I had a delightfully informal chat with him in his room at the South Australian Hotel, where he will stay until his departure for Western Australia on Saturday. The weather was quite cold—wintry in fact—yet I found him in his shirtsleeves, with the front of his shirt unbuttoned. "How warm this climate is," were his first words. "In Melbourne yesterday I scarcely knew what to do." Then he added, by way of apology, perhaps, "You know, I was born at Petrograd, and that is where my home has always been. There, of course, the conditions are much colder than they are here."

—A Difficult Task.—

It was not easy to persuade him to speak about himself, but this much I gleaned. When the war broke out he was a passenger on board a German vessel in the Red

ger on board a German vessel in the Red Sea. The steamer was captured by the British, and the officers and men made prisoners. Capt Klatchko was landed in Egypt, and, in accordance with instructions from the Russian Imperial authorities, reported at the British headquarters. Shortly afterward he was appointed to the 1st Australian General Hospital at Heliopolis, of which Dr. Ramsay Smith had charge. Subsequently he was attached to other hospitals, and altogether spent 18 months with the Australian Medical Staff. Although, at the outset, he did not speak a word of English, he soon acquired a sound working knowledge of the language, and, notwithstanding his fears to the contrary, to-day is able to express himself ably and fluently. He spoke in the most eulogistic terms regarding Dr. Ramsay Smith's great organizing powers, and said that never had he seen a more efficiently conducted hospital than No. 1 A.G.H.—and he went through both the Manchurian and the Russo-Japanese wars.

—A Happy Reunion.—

"Have you met your old commandant again since your arrival in Australia?" I enquired. The response was instantaneous. "Yes, yes. To-day I have had the great happiness of renewing acquaintance with both Dr. Ramsay Smith and Professor Watson, with whom I was associated in Egypt. They are admirable men, and have rendered splendid service." Then I asked him what he thought of the Australian soldiers. "Ah, they are fine fellows," he replied. "Yes, very fine fellows. I have come to like them immensely. They are good fighters, too. Last October I came out to Australia as second medical officer on board a hospital ship, which carried 400 sick and wounded men. Since then I have visited Queensland, New

Since then I have visited Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria, and now I am in South Australia on my way to Perth. And in all the cities I have been hailed by my old patients—hundreds of them. In the street they have come up behind me and struck me on the back, so—(suiting the action to the word, with considerable vigour). They gripped me by the hands, and asked me how I had been getting on. Why—(laughing heartily)—only the other day in Melbourne I was motoring with the Russian Consul-General when a returned soldier rushed up to the car, called out 'Hullo, old fellow, glad to see you again,' and, grasping me by a hand, added warmly: 'Come and have a "spot"' (meaning a drink)."

—Russians Like Australians.—

"How like the Russians the Australians are. Everywhere I go I see the resemblance. The same openness and candour. With my eyes closed I can distinguish an Australian. And Australia! The woods, the hills, and so on, how they all remind me of Siberia and Manchuria; which, indeed, are, in many ways, more like Australia than any other part of the world." During the long period which he spent in Egypt, the heat materially affected Capt. Klatchko's health. Shortly after having landed in Australia he went into a hospital, and although some time has elapsed since he was discharged, he is still more or less on the sick list. However, he is looking on the bright side of things; but it will be a happy day for him when he returns to his beloved Russia—and its low temperatures. At present he has charge of the Bureau of Information, which has been established in connection with the Russo-Australian Bureau of Commerce, with headquarters in Melbourne. In other words, he occupies a position similar in

words, he occupies a position in many respects to that of South Australia's Trade Commissioner in England. The policy of the Russian authorities is to strengthen the relationship between Russia and Australia, and to build up trade between the two countries.

—The Right Man for the Work.—

It would have been extremely difficult, if at all possible, to find a better man for the work in hand than Capt. Klatchko. He is eminently practical; at the same time he possesses vision and wonderful enthusiasm. His ambition is to see all the Germans "kicked out of Russia," and Englishmen and Australians installed in their places. He wants to see Australians go freely to Russia and Russians come freely to Australia. The two countries and the two peoples, he asserted, can help each other tremendously. On this theme he spoke with power and eloquence. "We have made a good start," he explained. "We have opened classes in Melbourne for the teaching of Russian, and similar classes will be formed in the other cities if the public are sufficiently interested to take advantage of them. Only a nominal fee is charged, because they are not conducted for money-making purposes, but primarily with the object of getting the business people acquainted with the Russian language. While in Perth I propose to give a lecture, and on my return to Adelaide, shortly an opportunity will be taken to place our aims before the general public. It is intended to have literature concerning Australia, its territories, its institutions, its productions, and other important matters circulated throughout Russia, and similar literature dealing with Russia distributed in Australia. In short, no effort is to be spared to cement the friendship existing between the two countries, and develop commercial and other activities."

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—The Revolution.—

The mention of the revolution brought the light of intense satisfaction into the eyes of Capt. Klatchko. "Ah," he exclaimed, "it has been a wonderful thing—the best thing that could have happened for Russia, and it will result in her fighting efficiency being enormously increased. Now every energy will be bent upon the winning of the war."

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