

Australia Day.

"Gosford District—We are Proud of You."

Gosford, your response to the coo-ee from the Dardanelles was noble. Your Australia Day efforts have created an impression unprecedented in the annals of your history. How often has it been said that you have been sleeping, or that you were so old as to cause your comatose state to be diagnosed as senile decay? Now, we find you casting this falsehood up in the face of your accusers. You have proved to us that you were neither dead nor asleep, and an introspection simply reveals the fact that you were "not understood." Your quintessence was that of the oak, or, probably more intelligible still, that of the citrus tree. Take an orange tree and plant it in March, and it invariably happens at various periods from then to October it is seen to droop, and wilt, probably to the extent as to almost appear dead. As the days, weeks, and even months go by, we look in vain for any visible signs of progress, October comes, and with it a revelation. Nature makes the call, and the tree responds. That response was only made possible by the action of forces not visible to the average person. Those forces had been acting silently but potently. During its apparent dormancy it was making what is known as root growth. This simile is applicable to the present occasion. Extend the weeks of dormancy of the orange tree from March to October to years, and you have the root growth period of Gosford's history. Its response to the call or test exceeded expectations, inasmuch as it resembled those trees, growing near the sea shore, which strike deeper root because of the lashing of the gales. Of your many efforts, the processional one looms largely before our eyes. The adjectives, splendid, majestic, superb, are three of many that may well be applied to describe the pageant that passed through the streets of Gosford on Australia Day, Friday, July 30th, 1915. To say less would be an injustice, to say more would be unnecessary. Splendid was the order in which everything proceeded, majestic were the various tableaux and displays, superb was the spirit that animated one and all. That such an effort was produced, and such a crisis reached, without some sacrifice, cannot for one moment be entertained. The person who thinks that the whole affair was created with just the shake of "an Alladin's lamp," has no conception of the industry involved in such an undertaking. Those sightseers who viewed the procession in the town at 12 noon on Friday last met the finished article. Prior to then the component parts lay scattered about in all forms chaotic and otherwise, in all parts of the district. To illustrate the embryo stage of the pageant, it may be likened to a visit paid to a large ship building yard. There one day you see a massive frame on the stocks, not only uncouth but very often unintelligible. A few months later a visit to the Antipodes is decided upon. First you book your berth, stride confidently down the pier, and are escorted aboard a huge ocean liner, practically a floating palace. During the voyage, and while enjoying the many benefits confluent with same, have you ever reflected how much industry was involved in placing those comforts before you in a tangible form? Grimy men, thundering noises, knitted brows, and probably angry words. But, through all this chaos and ferment, there was a bond of union that united the whole to the man who cared to look deep enough. So as we see with a ship, so it was with our procession. For some weeks prior to the event, people had been working ceaselessly and untiringly. Therefore, it was exceedingly gratifying to see that their af-

mensurate with their sacrifice. It has been well said that nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm. This probably accounts for a considerable amount of the success. For, whatever else the procession lacked, it certainly was not enthusiasm. To confirm this it will be necessary to illustrate the efforts observed in the main street on the day prior to the display. Actually speaking, this was the crescendo of the climax. At about 10 a.m. on that day a string of flags commenced to creep across the street, and rise into the air, almost simultaneously with Mr. Givney attaching bows of wattle to the verandah posts on the balcony of the Royal Hotel. From that time one hour had barely elapsed before the street had become an animated scene. Bunting of various colors commenced to trail, crepe paper to droop and glisten in the sun, Chinese lanterns to hang under the balconies and awnings, festooning to droop gracefully across the street, interspersed with rows of flags representative of allied and sympathetic nations. By evening a blank or bare post could not be seen. Trees of lillypilly, myrtle, cedar, and blackbutt had usurped these respective places, and introduced a complete transformation scene. The trees of wattle deserve special mention, inasmuch as it was its efflorescence period, and without any exaggeration the wealth of this bloom would be hard to equal in any town of the State. The next morning saw enthusiasts abroad early making active preparation for the fray. By the breakfast hour old Sol stepped forth, carrying the trident, to the surprise of many, and inexpressible delight of all. By 11 a.m. lorries, loaned by sympathetic owners, had arrived from all parts of the district. The decorated frames, &c., which had previously been prepared were placed on the lorries, and tableau organisers set everything to effect, and in good time. Those responsible for the decorations were Messrs H. G. Parry, W. Moase, Eric Ward, Jack May, Geo. Higgs and Master Jack May. Mrs. Alf. Higgs donated 70 yards of street festooning, for which the Committee was extremely grateful. All participants then made their way from the town to the starting base at East Gosford. Here chaos was resolved into order by Marshals Messrs Stafford, Uren, and Dalgleish. The Gosford Brass Band was placed at the head of the procession, and at 11.30 led off smartly with a march. The procession headed for Gosford and in its route passed along by the water's side, which was only separated by the sea-wall with the beautiful waters of Brisbane Water lashing up against it. The place, the scene, and the occasion must have brought the latent beauties home to many residents. Long before it left this in the rear, the head began to mount the Gosford Park Hill, where a mossy green slope bordered it on the right wing, backed home by the historic Church of England and beautifully situated Rectory, supported in the rear by a prominent hill-side, studded with Australian gums. Juxtaposition to this, and running along the roadside, was the Gosford Park, in the shape of a triangular headland. Here again this was receiving the felicitous lap of Brisbane Water, which extended visibly to Woy Woy on the south, and under the hill dotted by the palatial buildings of the Boys' Home, on the west. Looking north the main street took the form of a straight line, visible for about a mile and a half. As the eminence of the hill was mounted the bunting, flags, and festooning extending across the street, the decorations on the public buildings and business places was seen to effect. As each section passed this spot, and

the vantage point made possible the scenic revelations, the participants must have been impressed with the wealth of grandeur. Here also stood four of the noblest looking, if not the most historic Norfolk Island pines in Australia. Almost opposite and only about fifty yards away stood a marble monument erected to the memory of the Gosford heroes who fell in South Africa 1901-2. The monument on this occasion was suitably draped with the Union Jack. Mounted half way down and over all was a laurel wreath interspersed with wattle blooms. When the thoughtfulness of this "In Memoriam" action was observed, it must have struck a chord, in the hearts of those who even probably had never known previously the meaning of love and sacrifice. Was the monument not erected to keep fresh the memory of those who had died in a previous war, and were there not many brave and loved Australians dying in a foreign land at that very moment, in order that we might enjoy immunity at home? Reflecting on this all the response made to the calls of the various collectors along the route, throughout the day, and through numberless channels, the marvellous success accomplished may be somewhat accounted for. However, while we have been soliloquising and expatiating on the beauties, the procession has been continuing its progress. As it wended its way past the Royal Hotel, and came in contact with the sightseers it elicited comments on all sides. Artistic tableaux called forth admiration, and humorous sketches caused outbursts of laughter. Just past this spot Satan came running along, and being anything but a lovable character, screams followed his train. He represented himself as the Kaiser's god, and as he was late on this occasion, it is to be hoped that this will actually be the case on the Kaiser's day of settlement. After the cortege proceeded as far as it could safely manoeuvre, it returned, and adjourned to the Waterside Park. Here an appropriate speech was delivered by Mr. W. E. Kirkness. At the conclusion of this Messrs Chapman and Hills gave a most effective and realistic bomb throwing display from their aeroplane on the hillside. The Kaiser was then burned in effigy. This event followed with a maypole and dumb bell display given by the Public School children, and a juvenile march representing all nations. This brought the dinner hour into prominence, and the procession being disbanded an adjournment was made to the various patriotic depots provided for the occasion and purpose. The concourse of people being much greater than even the most enthusiastic optimist even imagined, depleted stocks soon brought "good dinners for a la" down to "only a cup of tea and bread and butter left, madam." The Auction Sale, commencing at 2 p.m., brings the procession to a close. It being our business to relate this event, the different displays are noted individually in the order they passed the central base at the intersection of Donnison and Mann Street.

Order and Description of Procession.

1. Mounted.— Marshal Stafford, Mr. S. W. Eggins as Napoleon, and Farrer Sergeant Farrant, of Erina, late of 1st Royal Dragoons, who carried many active service decorations. Mr Eggins made a typical Napoleon, his build and military bearing being most conspicuous throughout the procession.
- 2.—The Gosford Brass Band.
- 3.—Senior Pupils Gosford Public School, marching.
- 4.—Motor Car, displayed tableau "Britannia." Characters were:—Miss MacCabe as "Britannia," holding the trident, Mrs Paul, dressed as a sailor representing England on the sea, Dr. Paul as a soldier representing England on land.
- 5.—Railway exhibit, organised by the railway staff, containing 4 consecutive displays as follows:—"Australians in the Trenches." This display contained two banners, size 9ft x 3ft. One side bore the words, "Australians in the Trenches"; the other side, "Will they ever come?" in

were large posters conspicuously displayed, one representing a torn flag with an Australian girl standing by, and bearing the words, "Were you there?" The other depicted an Australian soldier standing with a foot on each side of the Dardanelles, coo-eeing to Australia for help. The third illustrated a "Wounded Soldier" still grasping his rifle. The mechanical part of this display was realistic to perfection. The trenches were raised on an extended lorry frame specially made, upon which were built spits of turf. Through various loop holes were placed cannons, which frequently fired charges along the route, giving a vivid effect to the whole display. Directly behind the firing line were Red Cross Nurses attending the wounded.

6.—The second display carried a 6 x 8 front banner as follows:—"Sultan and Harem being driven from Constantinople by Australian Soldiers." The conveyance consisted of a little apple cart, drawn by a small pony. This accommodated the Sultan along with his goods and chattels, which consisted of a motley collection of things that excited roars of laughter as it progressed along the route. Immediately behind the banner were members of the Sultan's Harem, dressed in the colors and garb of their country. These were followed very closely by an escort of Australian soldiers with fixed bayonets. Mr. N. Gillan, in the character of the Sultan, was all that could be desired. The Confidence reposed in his harem associates was proverbial. Never once was he noticed to give them a suspicious glance. Of them all, Mr. Passlow seemed to disregard the ire of his royal majesty least, for he was frequently observed to make bold by throwing kisses to the young chaps along the route.

No. 7 followed. It was the Kaiser in effigy, hanging from gallows erected on a vehicle. He was driven by Uncle Sam in the person of Mr. Ernie Parsons, whose make up was ideal. The vehicle carried signs depicting the "Kaiser's Last Ride" on one side, and "Caught by the Allies" on the other. A captured Zeppelin was also attached. Uncle Sam carried placards as follows:—"I am neutral," "My next note will be more decisive," &c.

8.—The Railway Staff's fourth display consisted of a wagon bearing a number of men representing "The Shirkers." Two large side banners were carried with the words "Shirkers" on one side, and "Never Works" on the other; also a large picture on the back, representing shells dropping on unprotected towns. The "shirkers" were pugilists, footballers, tennis players, punters and bookmakers, and a number of the "Never Works." The driver of the caricature, in the character of "B.K.," appeared to fit into the position admirably, while the ubiquitous Harry Smith assumed the adopted character of Jack Johnson without any apology being needed. In Harry the boxing fraternity was well represented, and gave ample proof in being fourteen stone, and this profession still being profitable enough to follow, that the resources of Australia was by no means exhausted yet. The get-up of these various displays on the whole reflects great credit on members of our railway staff, who must have sacrificed much time, and exercised great patience, in order to accomplish the success attained. Mr. Dwyer, S.M., led the railway exhibit, while Mr. Langford took the part of clown, and catered for the public generally.

9.—Decorated coach drawn by five ponies, driven by Mr G. Petch, and carrying Committee.

10. Messrs Chapman & Hills represented Flight Commanders of the Aviation Corps, and journeyed in a full sized model monoplane of the "Blériot" type, manufactured by themselves, and fully equipped with working propeller, air craft machine gun and revolvers. Bombs, both explosive and incendiary, were carried, and after the patriotic speech an exhibition of bomb dropping was given from the higher ground near the railway bridge, the loud reports and blaze of the incendiaries being most realistic. Messrs Moss and Allen supported the tableau in full aviation uniform.

11.—Tableau, "Australasian." In this display each State was represented by a school girl, attired in very effective costumes, with a sash across the shoulders, bearing the names of the State represented in gold letters. The central figure carried a sceptre, bearing a large gilded map of Australasia.

12.—Tableau, "Japanese." This also consisted of school children, dressed in pretty costumes, and arranged upon a lorry, tier on tier. This again was set off with festooning, and tricolor crepe paper, making altogether a very effective and instructive display. These two tableaux were organised by the Messrs Dent and Fletcher, of the Public School, to whom great credit is due.

13.—Gosford War Relief League