

# GERMAN QUACK & ATOPHAN

## Why Did "Dr." Becker Leave the Fatherland?

### ALARMING POSITION IN TANUNDA

**A GHASTLY menace to the lives of South Australians, and an appalling appearance of official negligence in regard to it, are revealed by recent happenings on the Murray Flats of South Australia.**

Atophan, a drug which has caused scores to die in agonising pain, is being bought and used extensively throughout the district by ignorant people who have been advised to take it by someone who knows full well its possible deadly effect.

A "HEALER" who has been refused registration as a doctor by the Medical Board of South Australia, and whose past is shrouded in mystery, has set himself up as a great doctor, and is battenning on the credulity of the German vigneron who make up almost the entire population from Kapunda to Swan Reach. With alarming frequency, cases of sudden death, or death after a short illness, have taken place, but although the police have made investigations, the local Justices, who are empowered to act as coroners, have not ordered a single inquest.

The district is probably unique in Australia, being practically a German colony. Before the war there were many men and women, born in the district, who had not throughout their lives learned more than a few words of English. It is natural, therefore, that the racial pride is strong, and things German are to them what the heather is to the Scotsman.

Latterly, however, whispers of strange things have reached Adelaide, and when the paragraph published below appeared in a local paper it was considered that an investigation was justified. The facts which were unearthed are given without comment. So striking are they that the mere publication should wake all concerned to a realisation that not only in the interests of the residents of this corner of the State, but for the protection of the whole community, immediate and drastic action is necessary.

The following paragraph appeared in the Angaston "Leader":—

May 2, 1929.

"Arthur Carl Graetz, of Tarrangurk, about 27 miles from Dimboola, Victoria, while on a visit to his cousin, Mrs. C. Schulz, of Tanunda Road, Nurootpa, was taken ill and died suddenly on Monday, at about six o'clock. Dr. Becker, of Tanunda, was summoned, but he found life extinct on his arrival. Deceased had been suffering from kidney trouble and blood pressure for some time. The coroner, Mr. J. A. Maywald, made an inspection and was satisfied that an inquest was not necessary."

The person referred to as "Doctor Becker" has in this country no more right to describe himself as a doctor of medicine than Robinson Crusoe would have. He arrived in Tanunda about two years ago, and gave out that he had just come from Germany. He styled himself "Dr. J. H. Becker, M.D.M.S. (Marburg)," and this was inscribed on a placard at his consulting room.

At first he was accepted at face value even by the medical men of the place. All the German folk, impressed by his qualifications, and believing that, as he had recently come from the Fatherland, he was the last word in medical science and practice, flocked to his rooms and paid him handsomely for his treatment.

ADV. 12.7.29

#### MID-DAY ORGAN RECITAL

A pleasing programme was submitted by Mr. John Horner at the weekly midday organ recital at the Elder Conservatorium on Thursday. Each item was thoroughly appreciated by a large audience. There was sufficient variety to suit all tastes, and to display to advantage the resources of the instrument. Dexterity of manipulation, color effects, and artistic reading gave an appropriate distinction to each number. The selections were—"Sonata in D Flat" (Rheinberger), the air, "Mein Jesus" ("Short Fugue in G Minor" (Bach), "Sposalizio" (Liszt), "Andante" from "Surprise Symphony" (Haydn), and "Imperial March" (Elgar). Mr. Lewis Dawes contributed the songs, "The Last Hour" (Kramer), and "Passing By" (Purcell), in nice style.

It was not long before the doctors, having apparently learned that the Medical Board had not registered Becker, refused to work with him. As he could not get an anaesthetist, he was not able to conduct or undertake surgery, but notwithstanding that there are many cases which cannot be treated without use of the knife, there is no record of anyone being turned away from Becker's door.

Some months ago, he removed the word "Doctor" from his door, although it remains before his name in the telephone directory of May, 1929.

About this time it was observed that nearly every prescription written by Becker was dispensed by the same chemist. At first Becker was wont to extol the virtues of atophan for treatment of rheumatic ailments, but latterly he had said little to indicate what drugs he is prescribing.

On occasion, more frequently during the past two months, the patient has not been given a written prescription at all, but has been instructed to call at the shop of M. E. Heuzenroeder at Tanunda, the chemist being presumably advised by telephone what mixture to prepare. Almost invariably the written prescriptions have been retained by the chemist.

In one instance, a patient took one of Becker's prescriptions to another druggist; but was told that he could not dispense it, as it was written in code. The patient states that the medicine was finally compounded by Mr. Heuzenroeder.

Arthur Graetz, aged 34, was not by any means a strong man. He carried with him a letter from a Victorian doctor which indicated that he had a high blood pressure. This was a precautionary measure, so that, should he be taken ill, the doctor summoned would have the history of his case at hand as an aid to rapid diagnosis.

While in the Tanunda district, he consulted "Doctor" Becker. He was given an examination, and directed to obtain a prescription from Heuzenroeder. Powders which he had been directed to take, according to a member of the household, were most unpleasant in taste and of brown color.

After a week of the treatment, he was taken ill suddenly. He complained of pains in the forehead, and then at the back of the head. Immediately following a hot bath, he collapsed.

Mr. Schulz was about to summon the nearest doctor, when Graetz, between moans, directed him to get Becker, and to ask that he be given something to deaden the awful pain immediately. Schulz hurried away, but before he returned Graetz was dead.

The police were notified, but in accordance with the direction of a local J.P., J. A. Maywald, boot-maker, no post

### Dropped the "Dr."

mortem was held and an inquest deemed unnecessary.

On June 16, Mrs. Elizabeth Schuster, of Freeling, aged 41, suddenly collapsed in the Freeling Hospital, where she was being treated from a complaint that appeared to be caused through a septic throat. A certificate that death was due to heart failure was signed and there was consequently no inquest.

Although a healthy woman, Mrs. Schuster had been suffering for a considerable period from a rheumatic affection of the knee. After having been treated by several doctors, she was recommended to consult J. H. Becker. His treatment consisted of a lotion and a brown powder of a most unpleasant taste, to be taken internally.

After the treatment had been in force for some time, Mrs. Schuster became so ill that her husband insisted that she see a doctor, and go into the hospital. This was a few days before

her death. She had complained of pains in the forehead and the back of

the head, and the eyes were no longer normal in appearance.

Early on the Sunday morning, the husband was sent for, as his wife, who had appeared the previous night to be on the mend, had taken a bad turn. Before he had left the house, another message urged him to make all possible speed as the condition was very grave. Before the distracted man reached the hospital his wife had passed away.

Although he has dropped the title "Doctor" from his plate, Becker still refers to himself as a doctor, and is known as "Doctor" throughout the district. People are now asking why, if Becker is the clever physician he claims to be, did he leave Germany? It may be that that question and others will be answered in the near future.

NEWS 12.7.29

#### National Broadcasting

Dr. E. Harold Davies, Adelaide:—The following may be of interest to those who realise the immense possibilities of broadcasting when directed to cultural as well as recreative ends.

At the conference of the National Council of Education held recently in Vancouver, and attended by Sir Archibald Strong and Dr. A. A. Lendon, Mr. J. C. Stobart (education director of the British Broadcasting Corporation) gave two lectures. One was on "Broadcasting and the Schools" and the other on "Wireless and Adult Education."

The audiences at Vancouver were so impressed by the arguments put before them, based on British experience, that at a discussion the following morning they adopted a unanimous resolution—"That in the interests of Canadian life and culture it is imperative to proceed at once to organise radio broadcasting on a basis of public service."

NEWS 16.7.29

#### TEACHER OF GEOLOGY

#### UNIVERSITY APPOINTMENT

#### Mr. A. R. Alderman Chosen

During the absence of Sir Douglas Mawson (professor of geology and mineralogy at Adelaide University) on the Australian Antarctic Expedition, Mr. C. T. Madigan, M.A., B.Sc. (lecturer in the department), will be assisted by Mr. Arthur Richard Alderman, M.Sc.

Mr. Alderman has acted in a similar capacity on two other occasions when Sir Douglas has been absent from the State. He is a graduate of Adelaide University, having gained the Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry and geology in 1924, and his Master of Science degree last year.

To further his studies, Mr. Alderman visited Britain and Europe on two occasions, and is at present engaged in post-graduate research at the University, particularly in regard to meteorites. In the near future he will begin the arranging of the mineral collection at the Museum.

His chief duties in assisting Mr. Madigan will be delivering lectures.

Born at Glenelg 23 years ago, Mr. Alderman is a son of Mr. R. G. Alderman (a director of G. Wood, Son & Co., Limited).

ADV. 12.7.29

#### GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

#### LECTURE BY DR. BIELER

The deputy director of the Imperial Geophysical Experimental Survey (Dr. E. Bieler) lectured on the work being carried out in Australia by his organisation in the Physics Lecture Hall at the University of Adelaide last night. He pointed out that until fairly recently few mineral deposits were found except on the surface, and it was not until the last few years that geophysical methods were used to detect the presence of minerals. Geophysical prospecting was not, however, quite as new as some people thought, as 100 years ago Fox used electrical methods on the mining fields of Cornwall. His methods were primitive, and he did not make much progress with his work. The main methods employed in geophysical survey could be classified as gravitational, magnetic, electrical, and seismic. Thermic methods had not been applied to any large extent, but it certainly had possibilities. The geophysical survey of Australia was being organised in three sections—gravitational, electrical, and seismic. Up to the present survey work had been carried out in three States.

ADV. 13.7.29

A cable message from Toronto states that Dr. R. G. Ellis, of Unley, has been appointed a research fellow by the Faculty of Dentistry of the University of Toronto. Dr. Ellis graduated at Toronto this year.