

LONE PINE

An Inverell Plant

Growing in Victoria Park

A recent article in the Sydney Morning Herald referred to a pine tree growing in the Victoria Park, Inverell, from a seed obtained from Lone Pine, Gallipoli, near the scene of one of the great battles on that peninsula.

The tree in question may be seen growing sturdily near the western corner of the tennis court and is being carefully attended to by Mr. Guan, the town gardener, who takes a very great interest in it. The article referred to gives the history of this tree which is very interesting and it is therefore reproduced as follows:—

Two trees, which are growing in Australia to-day have sprung from seeds of the "lone pine" which gave its name to one of the most memorable battles in which Australian soldiers were engaged on the Gallipoli peninsula, according to the claims of Mrs. G. T. McMullen, of Cardiff, near Newcastle.

The seeds were sent to Mrs. McMullen by one of her four soldier sons. They were first planted in an earthenware pot. When the two plants sprang up one was presented to Inverell, from which town Mrs. McMullen's sons enlisted. The other was sent to the military authorities and sent on by them to Canberra. The tree which was sent to Inverell was planted in Victoria Park. Mrs. McMullen understands that it is growing very sturdily. According to inquiries made this week, the tree which was sent to Canberra is still being nursed against the climate, but will be planted out this year.

Mrs. McMullen is quite definite in her statement that there can be no doubt that the seeds came from what is perhaps the most famous tree in the history of Australian nationhood. Her account is that her son, Private M. A. Smith, was killed in action on Gallipoli, in August, 1915. His body fell near the lone pine. Another of her sons—Lance-corporal B. C. Smith—was also fighting on the peninsula, and, on hearing of his brother's death, secured a cone from the tree and sent

it home. When he returned from the war he took possession of the cone with other of his war relics, but two seeds from the cone remained in the box in which it had been placed for safe keeping. Mrs. McMullen retained these seeds, and, in December, 1928, having made her permanent home at Cardiff, she decided to see whether they could be persuaded to grow. She was dubious, as she had previously heard that it was difficult to seed Gallipoli pines in Australia. Constant attention, however, persuaded the seeds to take root, and they came up as very pretty silver-blue plants, which later changed in color to bluish green. When Mrs. McMullen was satisfied that, given ordinary attention, the plants would survive outdoors in the Australian climate, she decided that it would be unwise and selfish to retain them in her own possession. She did not know but that they would be ignorantly destroyed after her death if allowed to settle in private ground. The presentations to Inverell and Canberra followed.

Mrs. McMullen has retained for herself one living souvenir of the adventure of Gallipoli—an abundantly growing plant sprung from clover seed gathered on the peninsula.