

### JERRY'S PLAINS.

#### CONFIRMATION SERVICE—LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE OF AN ANGLICAN CHURCH.

On Tuesday last two events happened in this little township which deserve to be recorded. The first of these was a confirmation in the morning by the Lord Bishop of Newcastle, when a large number of candidates were presented to him by their clergyman, the Rev. Huband-Smith. It is always a solemn sight to witness the youthful soldiers of the Cross publicly renewing their baptismal vows, and seeking for the grace of God to be confirmed in them, and we were pleased to notice with what attention and reverence these listened to the earnest and loving words of their good Bishop, and how many of them proceeded at once to act upon his counsel by remaining to partake of their first communion. The Rev. Canon White, of Muswellbrook, Rev. J. Shaw, of Scone, and Rev. B. E. Shaw, of Wollombi, were present, and assisted in the service.

The second event of the day was the laying of the foundation stone of a new church by Mrs. Pearse, of Plashed, to whose energy and the generous liberality of her husband it is, we believe, mainly owing that this work, after much delay, has really been commenced. The Bishop and clergy having arrived on the ground, the service was begun by chanting the 122d Psalm. This was followed by the reading 1 Cor. 3; by the Rev. Huband-Smith, and of the Collect for St. James' day, to whom the church is dedicated. A written paper and oblation were then placed in a cavity beneath the stone, which was lowered to its place, and a trowel being handed to Mrs. Pearse, she therewith laid the stone, while the Bishop pronounced the customary form of words.

The Apostles' Creed was next repeated, followed by prayer, and the singing of a hymn, after which the Bishop, addressing the people, said that he should be somewhat brief in what he had to say, as most of them had been present at the long service of the morning, and as the Rev. J. Shaw, of Scone, had been requested to deliver an address because of the esteem that was entertained towards his brother—their late beloved clergyman. He would, moreover, call upon each of the clergy present to say a few words of encouragement for this good work. It was with much satisfaction that after four years' delay he saw the foundation stone laid this day, with every prospect of the building being completed. The plans had been prepared by an able and experienced architect, whose other works in the diocese met with general approval. He thought there would be memorials of the beloved and faithful clergymen who had ministered among them, which would beautify the Church. One such, a painted east window, had already been promised by the relatives of their first clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Cooper. He hoped before the close of another year, to open and consecrate this church to the service and glory of God. He would now call upon the Rev. John Shaw to address them.

The Rev. J. Shaw said that the laying of the foundation stone of a new church is always an occasion of great interest and importance. It implies much—it speaks of progress in the past, of earnestness in the present, and of hopeful anticipations for the future. This district had long been blessed with a succession of faithful ministers; and he felt that it was out of regard to one of them—his brother—out of their appreciation of his labours among them; out of their recognition at the same time of the initiation during his incumbency of this good work, that he was invited to address them. Men pass, but the work they do abides. One servant of the Lord devoted to his Master's work, goes to his reward. Another comes and slacketh not his hand. And so "the sacred fire-  
stone, handed on with never ceasing care." As in

the days of undivided Israel, the temple of Jerusalem was the glory of their land, and the centre of their national life, and the heart of the nation beat there. So in our day, to a thoughtful and religious mind the glory of every place is its church. It is a visible sign of an inward spiritual fact. We are a Christian people in a Christian land, that Christ is in our midst, in our hearts. It is a proof that we look upon ourselves as citizens of no mean city, even an heavenly. The speaker then proceeded to draw a forcible comparison between what we render of our thoughts, our time, our substance to earth, and what to heaven. The world, he said, gets its own, and more than its own; and yet it is the work of the Church to combat the mighty forces of all evil, and sanctify through the holy ministrations of religion all the incidents of our daily lives. It is the Kingdom of Christ against the prince of the powers of darkness. A beautiful description was then given of the manner in which the Church in all her holy services is bearing her witness in the world, and spreading abroad righteousness and true holiness. Their building a new and beautiful church is the proof that they acknowledge all this, and that, though indeed they had a church already, yet they would rather act to the spirit of David, who said to Nathan the Prophet, "See now I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains," and Nathan said unto the king "God do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee."

The Rev. Canon White rejoiced that a work which had so much desired by both of the late incumbents was at last commenced. He believed that though absent in the body they might be present in the spirit and even so we are told that we are surrounded by a cloud of many witnesses who mark how we run our course, so they may be looking on with favour at the work we are now engaged in. That the true end and aim of all these material structures was that they should serve "for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Church of Christ," and he prayed that this might be as here, that they who should worship within these walls, soon to rise in beauty upon this foundation, should themselves be built upon the sure foundation, which is Jesus Christ, and in righteousness and true holiness adorn the doctrine of their God and Saviour.

The Rev. B. E. Shaw would add a few words of encouragement to those, the present incumbent and the liberal, even who are urging on this work. They should not be disheartened though it seemed to fall upon the few. This was ever the case. They are the few, who, at the cost of much self-sacrifice—often of misconception—do the work of God on earth. They look not for their reward from men, but from Him whom above all they honour—and nothing they know is lost which they can do for Him. The time will come, when, in looking back on their death-bed upon their few brief years of life, they can own that not what of the goods of this world they have stored up for their families or expended on their pleasures, but what they have devoted to God's service—is what cheers their hearts. In that hour when all else is passing away like the grey morning mist before the sun, how comforting the thought that somewhere among the spaces in which he lived, the servant of the Lord has helped to raise a house to God, where the voice of prayer and praise, and thanksgiving may ascend through many generations, to the ear of the Most High.

We understand that the church is to be of substantial stone work, in the early English style. The architect is Mr. Horbury Hunt.

Nov. 12.