

DEATH OF CANON HOPCRAFT.

AN ELOQUENT, POPULAR
CLERGYMAN.

One of the best-known clergymen of the Church of England in this state—Canon Hopcraft, rector of St. John's, Halifax street—passed away at the rectory, St. John's street, on Tuesday evening. For a considerable time he had been suffering from a painful internal disease, and last week his ailment took a turn which gave his friends serious concern. He gradually grew worse, and on Thursday fell into a coma, and though he subsequently rallied a little, no expectation was entertained that he would recover. He was in his sixtieth year.

—Biographical.—

The Rev. William Samuel Hopcraft was a native of Wolverhampton, and was born on August 25, 1848. In his youth his parents predetermined him for the Church without consultation with him on the trend of his inclinations. This raised in him a spirit of opposition, as he thought that he should at least have a voice in the matter. Upon that, the father and mother secured him a position, at the age of 19, in the office of Horsman & Co., builders and contractors—of which firm his father was a member—with a view to a partnership. His mind, however, was secretly set upon the ministry, and he spent much of his spare time in parish and mission work in the neighbourhood of his home. The Bishop of Liverpool, recognising his ability in these directions, offered him ordination as a literate, but urged him to take the theological course at St. Aidan's College. He accepted the suggestion, and, after going through the course, went in for the Cambridge Preliminary Theological, and obtained a first class. Accepted by the Bishops of Liverpool, Lichfield, and Carlisle, he received a curacy in the last-named diocese, and was ordained a deacon in 1883 by the late Right Rev. Dr. Harvey Goodwin for the parish of Workington. The curate in charge removing six months later, he was admitted to priest's orders, at the special request of the people, and found himself in charge of a parish of 12,000 souls, assisted by a junior curate.

—Work in South Australia.—

The Rev. A. G. Rawstorne, late of the Diocese of Adelaide, urged him to come to South Australia, and after a few days' thought he agreed to do so. On arrival, in



THE LATE CANON HOPCRAFT.

1886, he was appointed by Bishop Kennion to the mission district of Petersburg. Under his leadership new church buildings were erected at Petersburg, Carrieton, and Hammond, and at Terowie a church was bought which had previously belonged to another denomination. A parsonage was also erected at Petersburg, and debts were removed from Jamestown, Orroroo, and Petersburg. On the division of the diocese into rural deaneries in the time of Bishop Kennion, the Rev. W. S. Hopcraft was elected Rural Dean by the clergy in the deanery of Petersburg and the North, which office he held until he left the North to take the rectorship of St. John's Church. Early in 1890 the incumbency of St. Augustine's, Port Augusta, became vacant, and, at the special request of Bishop Kennion, Mr. Hopcraft was appointed. On his departure from Petersburg mission district the people presented him with an illuminated address. At Port Augusta Mr. Hopcraft's deep earnestness, powers of speech and organising ability were abundantly recognised, and he was instrumental in erecting church buildings at Port Augusta West and Blinman.

—Work in Adelaide.—

After five years at the northern port, the recognition of his pulpit ability secured him an invitation to the rectory of St. John's as successor to Canon Poole. He accepted the charge, and was installed in the new sphere in 1895, and shortly after made a Canon of St. Peter's Cathedral. It was not long before he earned a name in the metropolis as a most earnest and eloquent exponent of the Scriptures, and acquired an immense influence throughout

eloquent exponent of the Scriptures, and acquired an immense influence throughout his populous parish. New life was infused into the services at St. John's, and often the seating accommodation was taxed to the full.

—Invitation to Broken Hill.—

When he had been at St. John's about seven years Canon Hopercraft was invited by the Anglicans at Broken Hill to transfer his services to that parish. When this became known in Adelaide the Canon was inundated with letters, and a large and enthusiastic meeting of parishioners begged him not to leave the church which he had so well consolidated. An appreciative resolution, in which the hopes of the meeting were outlined, was carried unanimously amid prolonged cheering after Canon Hopercraft had been invited into the hall. The rev. gentleman was so deeply affected by this spirited demonstration that he begged to be excused from attempting to speak, and retired. Later in the evening, after having given the matter full consideration he decided to remain at St. John's, as he felt that he could not resist the unanimously expressed desire of his parishioners. Referring to the matter on the following Sunday he said to his congregation—"Your verdict is irresistible. The expression of feeling has touched me deeply, and strengthened me, yet humbled me, and revealed to me a love I was not aware of. And now, after the kind things you have said, my expectations are increased, and I look for a more hearty co-operation than ever in order that together we may do better things." That was six years ago, and, in the time that has elapsed since, Canon Hopercraft has given the people of his best, bringing to bear on the work of the ministry the result of wide reading and an intimate acquaintance with the development of theological thought. The quality of his sermons indicated that they were the product of an analytical mind, and they were presented with an eloquence and vigour which charmed his hearers. Nor were Canon Hopercraft's sympathies confined to his own church, though not unnaturally that communion held the first place in his affections. He interested himself in the work done by other denominations, and on several occasions actively identified himself with their efforts. The deceased clergyman was also closely associated with a number of philanthropic societies and agencies, including a long connection with the Prisoners' Aid Association, the Aborigines' Friend Association, and the Kalyra Consumptive Home. About a year ago he returned from a trip to England, which was taken in the hope that it would restore his somewhat impaired physical strength, but in that respect its effects were only temporary. He is survived by a widow in the old country, a son in the Anglican ministry, and a daughter—Mrs. C. F. Beston, of Malvern.