Anzac Day in Orange

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1914—MEMORIAL HALL—1918.

Standing upon one of the principal eminences of the town, adjoining the Town Hall at the intersection of Byng and Anson streets, it is central and in all respects excellently situated. Facing the east, it overlooks an imposing aggregation of business and residential structures, with Mount Lindsay as their background, and a broad expanse of rich pastoral, agricultural and orchard country lying on either side. Away to the north-east the rugged Ophir country is swept by the eye, bringing to mind things which are writ large in our own and our Commonwealth's history. Here it was that the sturdy pioneer delved and brought to light Australia's first gold, the asset which set the foundation of a glorious future by attracting to its shores men of the type which build nations. What indomitable courage, potence, perseverance, faith and powers of endurance possessed them! No obstacle too great, no deprivation too forbidding to daunt them. They came to win from Nature what the Creator of it all had chosen by His own good plan to hide away where strength and fortitude were needed to succeed. We who come after them gather the fruits of their labour, secure in a heritage which is great amongst the world's great possessions. At the opposite angle, away to the south-east, rise the sepulchral columns which mark the resting place of the dead. Some were in the zest and yellow leaf with the fibrous veins made hard and gritty by the service which they gave to their fellows, and the antiques out of life rich and deep-hued with the impress of "something accomplished, something done." Others left the branch while yet the full green of vigour and promise was upon them, their work but half done, their passing the mystery which is beyond the ken of mortals. We know them and we know their worth for they are but of yesterday. Verily do their works live after them, greater monuments than all which may be raised in marble and in stone. Not a far cry from here to the shores of Gallipoli: no marked difference in the spirit which animated them. They fought for progress, for civilisation, for right, for all that counts in the well-being and the uplifting of humanity. And truly they were Anzacs all, some wounded and battle-scarred, some high and some low in the ranks, yet all worthy souls whose praises men sing and whose memory is cherished. 'Twas such a spirit which prompted the raising of this Memorial Hall to the war heroes who fled forth from Orange and district to participate in the Great War.

A DESCRIPTION.

The building itself is a fine addition to the adornments of the town, and reflects the greatest credit on the architect, Mr. J. P. McLean. It is situated in Anson street, next to the Town Hall, and stands on a frontage of 32 feet by a depth of 80 feet. The style of architecture adopted is of the Doric school, and, with its bold columns, and heavy cornices, gives a fine show of strength and stability. The main front entrance is of local marble, with trachite steps. Surmounting the main doorway is a projecting balconette, with a heavy iron railing, supported by elaborately carved consoles. This feature gives an artistic tone to the whole facade. The cement work on this portion is a work of art, and was carried out by Messrs Bartlett and Lane, of Orange. Between the columns, the brickwork is of Sydney pressed bricks, tuckpointed, which throws the various forms into relief and gives a pleasing effect to the whole. The main entrance to the building is through a spacious hall 8ft wide, which is intercepted by beautiful Queensland maple swing doors, glazed with bevelled plate glass, and elaborately finished with moulded canopy, with cornice over same, all in maple. At the end of the entrance hall is the memorial hall, which is the main feature of the building. No expense has been spared to make this portion of the building a suitable shrine for housing the honor rolls, for which it was specially assigned. The room is octagonal in shape, and has a floor space of nearly 300 superficial feet. The floor is laid in Australian hardwood parquetry, and is one of the finest examples of this class of work in the Commonwealth. Two fine lead light memorial windows, of appropriate design, give light to the chamber, and the whole of the woodwork is of Queensland maple. The ceilings, whitewash of fibrous plaster, were specially designed, and are enriched with floral decorations, panelled into bays by deep projecting beams, and finished with bold cornices. The walls are finished in Keen's cement, and the honor board, in carved Queensland maple, is fixed on the back wall opposite the entrance. At the left hand of the entrance hall is the stair well, in which are fine staircases in Queensland kauri. This has been erected to give access to the assembly room upstairs, while at the right hand side is a room to be used as an office. At the back and adjoining the memorial hall is the billiard room, which has a floor space of 750 superficial feet. Provision has been made for two billiard tables. Opening from the billiard-room are the lavatories and bathroom, all fitted with the latest sanitary equipment. On the first floor is the assembly hall, with a floor space of 66ft x 31ft. This hall has a specially prepared floor, and is splendidly lighted by ten large windows. A stage has been erected, also kitchen, pantry, and ladies' lavatory provided on this floor. There is a doorway opening to the front balconette over the front entrance, and a back balcony and fire escape have also been provided. The ceilings, except the memorial hall, are all of fibrous plaster, panelled out in oregon. The walls are plastered with a dado, the billiard room and assembly hall of tinted plaster.

The building was carried out by Mr J. D. Ryan, of Orange, for the committee, under the architect, Mr. P. J. McLean, with Mr. J. N. Deeble, of the Federal Architect's office, acting as honorary adviser to the committee.