

ST. PETER'S HALL, PETERSBURG.

—Foundation Stone Laid.—

An interesting and imposing ceremony took place on the grounds adjoining St. Peter's Church, Petersburg, on Wednesday afternoon, when the Bishop of Adelaide (Right Rev. Dr. Harmer) laid the foundation stone of the new parish hall, which is in course of erection in memory of the late Archdeacon French. There was a large attendance, consisting of members of various denominations, which alone testified to the great respect and esteem in which the late clergyman was held by the residents of Petersburg. Dr. Harmer was supported by Archdeacon Bussell (of the Frougton), the Revs. J. H. Frowin (of Jamestown), G. S. Ives (of Laura), A. M. Webb (of Orroroo), H. L. Ebbs (of Broken Hill, late assistant priest of this parish), and F. H. King (rector Petersburg), and Messrs. J. G. Craig, B. F. Rushton, J. J. Emery, and G. W. Halcombe. Splendid weather prevailed. The rector asked Bishop Harmer to lay the foundation stone. On behalf of the congregation of St. Peter's he cordially welcomed the Bishop, whose visit to Petersburg was but one more example of the interest he took in the doings of his parishioners here. The proposal for the erection of the hall was first broached by the late Archdeacon French in July, 1900. A meeting was held, and a committee appointed to canvas the town for funds. By March, 1901, the treasurer reported that there was £26 in hand. When he (the speaker) came to Petersburg in January, 1902, the sum had increased to £97. During the first two years—the worst ever experienced in Petersburg—not much progress had been made, but by the end of 1903 the committee had £185 in hand, and stone on the ground to the value of £14. They considered that, with the prospect of good seasons, they were justified in starting building operations. A further £250 had been borrowed from the Church Office; but, as it was computed that the work could not be carried out at a cost of less than £500, a deficiency still remained. It would thus be seen that the prime mover in the erection of the building was the late archdeacon. When in 1901 he received the well-earned promotion of the Archdeacon of Adelaide, the committee hoped that the Archdeacon would lay the foundation stone, but in God's Providence he had been called away to his rest, and it was then decided that the hall should be erected as a memorial to him. He had received from Mrs. French a kindly letter, in which that lady stated "how little she thought when the late Archdeacon and Mr. Brimage had chosen the site for the hall that when it was erected it would be as a monument to her husband's memory." It was a source of gratification to all to know that the present site was the one selected by the late Archdeacon French, and to know that his wishes were being acted upon. Upon the stone to be laid were the letters A.M.D.G. They were the initial characters

of the motto to be laid were the letters A.M.D.G. They were the initial characters of the Latin motto, "Ad majorem dei gloriam"—the literal translation of which was "To the greater glory of God." That was the purpose of the hall. He trusted that the erection of such a hall would promote the greater glory of God. The Sunday school children of St. Peter's Church would meet there, and it would be used by the different organizations which existed in the parish.

The inscription read, "A.M.D.G. In memory of Samuel French, Archdeacon and Incumbent of Petersburg, 1893-1901. This stone was laid by the Lord Bishop of Adelaide, March 2, 1904."

The stone having been laid, the Bishop said no parish was complete without its hall. It was in this building that the growth of parochial organizations would be made. It was there that all social functions would take place, and all features of parochial interest dealt with. From what he had already seen of the contractor's care and precision, he was satisfied that the work would be completed in a satisfactory manner. The stone which he had just had the pleasure of laying was the best of its kind and one of the finest cut and lettered which had come under his notice in a long experience of such ceremonies. When next he visited Petersburg he trusted the hall would be

near completion. He hoped that not only members of the Church of England, but also the adherents of other forms of faith would take advantage of the opportunity which the hall would afford of promoting the brighter side of life. Mr. King had already told how close to Archdeacon French's heart had been the scheme which they were now carrying out. All had thought the Archdeacon would execute the function he was then performing, but God had ordered otherwise. There was no need to remind the present congregation of the beautiful traits of Archdeacon French's character, but there was need that their children should be instructed in those virtues. The late Archdeacon possessed many rare qualities, any one of which was sufficient to bring a man into notice. He was an excellent scholar, and had not been content with the ordinary pass degrees of Cambridge, but had taken honours in the classics and mathematics; he was also a great theologian. His splendid library was always at the disposal of any young clergyman anxious to read books which were difficult to obtain. But it was not so much as a scholar that they remembered the late Archdeacon as a lovable and kindly worker in the parish. When Bishop Kennion found it necessary to appoint an Archdeacon of the north it was felt that a man who was a scholar, possessed powers of organization, and who was able to impart sound advice was needed, and the late Archdeacon French was the one who it was thought was most fitted to fill the position, and he was chosen. Though the newly created archdeaconry claimed a lot of his time, he was still able to find the necessary hours to aid his clergy

claimed a lot of his time, he was still able to find the necessary hours to aid his clergy and parishioners in their private affairs, as well as to keep a sharp eye upon the mission stations in his district. Many examples had been given the speaker of kind actions done by Archdeacon French. It was, then, no wonder that so great a gathering, not only of members of the Anglican Church, but of other denominations, all esteeming the late Archdeacon's memory, should have come to witness that ceremony. He thanked the brass band for the aid which it had given to the ceremony. He hoped all present would educate their children by the example of the unostentatious kindness which had ever characterized the life of Archdeacon French.

The collection was taken up, and £33 10' was laid on the stone. After the ceremony the Bishop, clergy, band, and choir were entertained at afternoon tea in the rectory by the Rev. F. H. and Miss King.

The stone is a handsome block of Italian marble 2½ ft. in length, 1½ ft. high, and 1 ft. thick, and weighs 6½ cwt. It is undoubtedly the finest foundation stone in the parish.

In the evening a service was held in St. Peter's Church. Archdeacon Bussell preached a thoughtful and eloquent sermon. After the service the visiting clergy, with their friends, were invited by Mr. and Mrs. J. G. Craig to meet the Bishop at their residence. Dr. Harmer, with Archdeacon Bussell, returned to Adelaide by the mid-day train on Thursday, while the other visiting clergy also left for their various parishes during the day.