

-CHURCHES AND CHURCH AFFAIRS-

ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH,
KENSINGTON.

A 75-YEAR-OLD ANGLICAN EDIFICE.

What an old country setting of trees and flowers surrounds this historic little parish church, situated a little more than a mile from the pulsating thoroughfares of our modern city. There amid its pleasant spaciousness, with no heavy noises to dull the ear, the parishioners are able to gather each Sabbath morning for worship, inspired by the twittering and calls from the surrounding bird-life sanctuary, the little feathered songsters proclaiming, as it were, their hymns of thanksgiving to the Creator of all.

Bishop Short, having arrived in the colony on December 28, 1847, soon after decided to rent a house at Kensington, then a village with a few inhabitants. The land between there and Adelaide (now known as Norwood and Kent Town) was a forest with little undergrowth, and here and there a cottage. A church and school building society (corresponding to the present Bishop's Home Mission Society) had been formed in 1846. The fact that Bishop Short resided at one time in Kensington, and at another in Norwood, was probably the reason for deciding upon the erection of a church at Kensington for the convenience of the people scattered between St. John's, Adelaide, and the foothills. Prior to leaving England the Bishop had obtained considerable funds for church buildings, among other purposes. Portion of that money, and a small supplementary grant which the Government allowed for church purposes, was doubtless the initial help towards Kensington Church, the first part of the building probably costing about £1,000, and other additions and improvements coming gradually by local efforts. Bishop Short and his family attended St. Matthew's, and it is recorded that on one occasion he was completely "bushed" while walking from his house at Beaumont, near Burnside.

Church Built in 1848.

St. Matthew's Church is a nicely appointed English-looking structure, nestling among its wooded surroundings, with a background of hills. It was built in 1848 on a part of Kensington, now known as Marryatville. The acre was granted by the South Australian Company from part section sold to the Brunskill's, and that surrounding land subsequently passed into the possession of the Cavenagh Mainwaring's, and then to the late Mr. T. R. Searle. In those days much expense was saved in church building by gifts of stone and free quarrying, sand and free carting. The brothers, William, Charles, and Henry Dean were among the leading workers. The sand was obtained from the creek on

Dean were among the leading workers. The sand was obtained from the creek on the Reed's property at Heathpool. Cedar was the wood mostly used for interior work, and it is believed that many of the early worshippers built their own pews to a set design. The members of the Reed family still pay their accustomed dues for the privilege of a place in the church. The ceremony of laying the foundation stone was performed by the then Colonial Secretary, the Hon. A. Mundy. Although the stone cannot now be identified, an old lady only lately informed the rector that as a child, she saw the stone laid, and at the time Mr. G. W. Hawkes gave her 6d. to place thereon. At the consecration, in 1851, there were present Bishop Short, Dean Farrell, Archdeacon Hale, the Revs. W. J. Wilson, G. Newenham, and E. K. Miller. Of those who saw the nave of the church completed, the last person (Mr. Miller) lived to attend the fiftieth festival of the consecration, and preached upon the occasion. The early charge of the church for two years devolved upon Archdeacon Hale and the Rev. P. Wilson. The Archdeacon, upon being transferred to St. John's Church, Adelaide, was followed in 1851 by the Rev. John Watson, who remained for a period of four years. Unfortunately no record of his work appears to have been preserved at the church.

Thirty-three Years' Incumbency.

The Rev. Edmund Jenkins was inducted as incumbent in 1855. Those were days when every small advancement in the dignity of worship, or in the matter of accommodation, came only a little at a time, and when the paying off of each £100 of church debt represented the changing of a millstone of weight to a milestone marking relief. During the earlier portion of Mr. Jenkins's long term of office, aggregating 33 years, the act of placing on a jacket as a protection against raindrops inside the church, or even the holding up of an umbrella for the same purpose, was not considered a ludicrous matter, but one of necessity, until a better roof or ceiling was provided. Candles in suspended iron hoops gave place to oil lamps, and at a later date to gas. A small choir, with a harmonium in the gallery, was in due course followed by the building of a chancel choir. Mr. Jenkins was a clergyman who inspired his people to desire something better, and that was provided in various ways as circumstances permitted. He received valued help by laymen of the type of Mr. Hull (the Hydraulic Engineer), who at every opportunity, on week days or on Sundays, was drawn to his church. In the late eighties Mr. Jenkins,

days or on Sundays, was drawn to his church. In the late eighties Mr. Jenkins, becoming a semi-invalid, received assistance from the Rev. Pymar Dodd, and while in temporary residence close by, during which time the rectory was undergoing alterations and repairs, he passed away. He was laid to rest by the chancel wall. Mr. C. E. Owen Smyth, a valued worker in the church, was his warden for many years.

Handsome School Built.

From 1888 to 1900, the Rev. W. A. Swan, in his early manhood, brought into the parish life the exercise of his energy and organizing ability. During Canon Swan's incumbency a handsome school building (St. Matthew's Hall) was erected at the corner of Bridge street and Wellington street, the foundation stone being laid by the Hon. A. Hay, M.L.C., on March 14, 1891. That was a result of the method of combining the work of the parish hall and the church school in church ministrations. The benefit of that further equipment for parish work has since been felt, for a church hall is now regarded as necessary in the vocation, as any tradesman's workshop in his calling. The North Kensington Mission came under the charge of Mr. Swan in 1889. St. Mary's Church, as it is now known, was the outcome of the organization of the Bishop's Home Mission Society, of Bishop Kennion, and at the opening of that field of work, on the nomination of Archbishop Whittington, Mr. H. C. Shortt, now warden of St. Matthew's, was licensed as special lay reader for the mission. The extension of the rectory was completed about 1890. Canon Swan was a keen Freemason, and while living in the eastern suburbs he laid the foundation stone of Emulation Lodge. The Rev. R. W. G. Dempster succeeded to the incumbency in 1900, and with the exception of a year abroad (1910-11), has had charge since. During his long term of office much has been accomplished in the developmental life of the church and parish. He has been successful in meeting the varied demands of present-day activities, while at the same time preserving the traditions of the earlier days to a great extent. Nearly £2,000 has been applied to useful purposes in recent years, including additions to the church hall, the complete restoration, and additions to, the church building, the latter renovations being carried out in 1912; a succession of two pipe organs, the present one being a beautiful instrument; and all necessary appurtenances for divine worship. On looking over the church one recalls the memory of many who had former association with the church. The font and ewer are a reminder of the well known family of Wilsons; the reredos, of the Deans; the sanctuary panels, of the Bottings; and the organ, of the Stevens family. The beautiful war memorial on the eastern wall contains over 100 names on the roll of honour—about one-fifth of that number being recorded on the roll of sacrifice.

"Many Nameless Graves."

The burial ground at St. Matthew's is the oldest in the municipality of Kensington and Norwood. Many of the tombstones bear dates nearly 70 years back; in fact, this little cemetery is what an Australian would regard as possessing considerable similarity to an old English churchyard. In such a spot might Thomas

considerable similarity to an old English churchyard. In such a spot might Thomas Gray have sat on that eventide when he penned those sublime and beautiful lines known to almost every reader of English poetry. It is an impressive little place, with its foliage rising in dense masses above the monuments. Most of the ground is occupied, some of the graves being

right under the shadow of the church. Some years ago the enclosure presented a neglected appearance, but latterly much of the rubbish has been cleared away, leaving the large gums, acacias, and cypresses to beautify the spot. The cemetery has long since been closed to all but the relatives of those already buried there, but interments very rarely take place at St. Matthew's nowadays. As is usual in all cemeteries, there are many nameless graves. There are no tombs of any beauty or elegance of design. Among those interred were Col. Peter Egerton-Warburton, formerly Commissioner of



REV. EDMUND JENKINS,
Incumbent from 1855-1888.

Police, and a well-known explorer, who died in 1880. There is also a tomb of Police-Inspector Pettinger, who was shot at Government House on February 4, 1862, by Robert Seaver, an ex-constable, who afterwards suffered death for his crime. Prominent also are the names of Mr. Joseph Stilling (who died in 1863), the Baroness Von Oertzen (1864), Mr. William Rogers, of Tusmore (1854), and his wife, Ann (1865), Mr. E. P. Meredith (1878), and the Rev. Edmund Jenkins (1888). Mr. Jenkins's remains rest within a few feet of the walls of the church in which he laboured so long and devotedly. A noted inscription is on a quaint tombstone, and reads as follows:—"Benjamin





REV. CANON SWAN,
Incumbent from 1888-1900.

Baye, died 14th June, 1836, aged 70 years. He served his country in 11 general engagements, and was with the British Army during the memorable retreat to Corunna. He was a kind husband and father, and a faithful friend and servant." This stone was erected as a token of regard by the governors, masters, and scholars of the Collegiate School of St. Peter, Adelaide.

Armistice Day Anniversary Service.

The Rector conducted the service last Sunday evening. Speaking on the question of peace between the nations, Mr. Dempster said they had gathered to celebrate the anniversary of Armistice Day. At a time when they were considering



REV. R. W. G. DEMPSTER.

REV. R. W. G. DEMPSTER.
The present incumbent (since 1900).

the question how peace between the nations could be perpetuated, they did not want "wet blankets" thrown upon the world's enthusiasm for peace by such statements as that of Lord Birkenhead, whose remarks had been reported a day or two before in the local press. They wanted to dwell upon the strength of that super-nature which came to men through the power of God. The article referred to would do much to chill the enthusiasm of those who were labouring for peace. The present danger was not ignorance so much as perverted ideas among those to whom the world was looking for knowledge and guidance. In the face of infidelity, or a rather qualified allegiance to God, how could He use men as His human agents if they were half-hearted in proclaiming the message which should be trumpeted to the world with no uncertain sound. Mr. Lloyd George had stated recently that the only possible means which he could conceive whereby the trouble between the nations could be solved would have to be found and worked out by the churches. If the church posed as a teacher, then the secular world had a right to expect that the church would heal its own troubles, and yet they had beheld a warring Christendom. Inside the church there existed hostility, prejudice, and ill will, and the word of God had been withheld from the public schools. There was a great deal of contrariness in human nature, and God, as a wise schoolmaster, found it necessary in these times to withhold blessings, just as He had in former days endowed His children with them, in order that through present chastisement He might make them fit recipients of future blessings. God would bring about an abiding peace through human efforts; but if Christian people refused to do their part, it would never be accomplished. Some people said it was a matter for politicians and others to settle. The

temptation which faced a man when he went to vote was often consideration for self-interest, and men were placed in power to secure personal gain rather than to carry out what they conscientiously believed to be the will of God. How could the secular world expect God to bring about a cessation of war unless those who professed to follow the Prince of Peace were true to their ideals?

The thirtieth article of the weekly series will deal with Hindmarsh Square Congregational Church.