

## THE LATE PRIVATE W. PETTY, OF GRETA.

### A MONUMENT TO HIS MEMORY.

There was a gathering of about 400 people at the Greta cemetery on Sunday afternoon, when a monument, erected to the memory of Private Wm. Petty, youngest son of Mr. J. B. Petty, of Greta, who died from enteric fever in Pretoria Hospital on December 27th last, was unveiled. The purchase of the monument was effected by means of public subscriptions, and a substantial amount was raised, the kindly feeling existing in the district being further exemplified by the reader and congregation of the Church of England agreeing to postpone their usual service on Sunday afternoon in order to be present at the ceremony. The committee were unfortunate in selecting a suitable day, and the date eventually chosen proved to be inconvenient for a number of persons who were desirous of being present. The chaplain of Private Petty's regiment, Rev. Smith M'Bain, of Gippsland, who had been chosen to unveil the monument, was one of those who could not attend, and the Rev. Robert Jackson, of the Primitive Methodist Church, Greta, was, therefore, invited to officiate. The monument was draped with the Union Jack.

Mr. J. FINDLOW, President of the committee, first explained the reason for the gathering and the steps that led up to the erection of the monument in memory of their friend, Trooper Petty, whose death they all deplored. Delay had occurred through the monumental masons being very busy, and that day's ceremony had to be postponed several times through circumstances over which the committee had no control. He had also to apologise for the absence of Rev. Smith M'Bain, who, as chaplain of the regiment in which the late Trooper Petty served in South Africa, had been asked to unveil the monument, but he was unable to attend because of his ministerial duties at Stratford. Rev. Mr. M'Bain wrote expressing his great regret that he could not, for at least two months, spare the three days necessary for a trip to Greta and was debarred, therefore, from assisting at the ceremony designed to do honour to one he had highly esteemed.

In addition to an apology from Rev. Smith M'Bain, apologies were read from Dr. M'Inerney, M.L.A., Mr. J. Bowser, M.L.A., Corporal H. S. Hennessy and Lieutenant C. J. Ahern, the writers expressing much regret that owing to the

pressing much regret that owing to the Royal festivities requiring their attendance in Melbourne they were unable to be present at the unveiling of Private Petty's monument.

Rev. R. JACKSON said he was exceedingly sorry that the gentlemen whose apologies had been read were prevented from being present, and he regretted most of all the absence of Rev. Mr. M'Bain, who left Victoria as chaplain of the Bushmen's Contingent (of which their late friend, Private William Petty, was a member), and remained with it during the several months he was in South Africa. Rev. Mr. M'Bain, in a letter to the committee recently, told them that when he was returning to Victoria the contingent, knowing that he had been doing chaplain's duty gratuitously, collected a sum of money as a present for him, and the late Private Petty was selected by his comrades to hand it to the recipient. Private Petty was one of the last men to whom the chaplain spoke before he left South Africa. It was sad whenever two powers entered into conflict, and when the cost and the sufferings were thought of it was no wonder that we longed for the time when there would be no necessity for nation to rise up against nation. No wonder that some earnestly prayed "Thy Kingdom come;" and he was convinced that as the Kingdom of Jesus Christ grew there would come "peace on earth and goodwill towards men." While we might regret that it was necessary for Britain to take up arms against the Boers in South Africa we should remember that President Kruger was wholly responsible for the war and that it was not caused (as some of our opponents alleged) by Mr. Chamberlain in a desire to wipe out the remembrance of Britain's humiliation in 1881. Britain's unpreparedness showed that there was no desire for war, but Kruger's stubborn refusal in regard to several matters made England feel that she must take some steps to protect her 26,000 subjects who petitioned her. The war had displayed the unity and loyalty of all British-born people, and as one had said "Never before were the bonds of the Empire so closely drawn and the unity of the English-speaking people so visible, and never was that unity more earnestly employed or intelligently directed to definite moral ends." When the call came for men from our State it was surprising to see so many of our best men volunteering to go to South Africa to fight under the Union Jack.

Africa to fight under the Union Jack. The late William Petty left with the Bushmen's Contingent in March last year, arriving at Capetown on April 4th, and at Beira five days later. The contingent was then ordered through one of the roughest parts of South Africa, and had their first brush with the enemy on June 22nd. They met the enemy at a pass, and Private Petty, writing to his relatives, said that the orders were simply to "keep cool, collected, and seek as much cover as possible; every man to take care of himself as much as possible." Petty and another soldier took refuge behind a rock, and so dangerous was their position that as Petty was in the act of filling his pipe a bullet struck the ground near his face, covering it with dust, while a little later the stock of his mate's rifle was split into pieces by another bullet. There were 300 Victorians against 1000 Boers, but they accomplished their task without serious consequences. There was another brush with the Boers about the end of June, lasting from eight o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon, and it was in this battle that Private Oliver, of Milawa, lost his life. It was in this battle, too, that Private Petty's horse became unmanageable and got away into the bush, where the rider had to dismount to release the animal from an entanglement, and then ride back to a place of safety while bullets were whizzing all around him. Private Petty took part in five engagements with the Boers, and it was in the last engagement that Private Tom Lloyd, of Benalla, was wounded. After the enemy had been driven back Chaplain McBain and Private Petty helped Lloyd back to the camp, a distance of seven miles, and it was an unfortunate circumstance that Lloyd was unable to be present that day to tell his own story of the relief given him on the occasion referred to. Private Petty, who had not received any injury in the five brushes with the enemy, was stricken with enteric fever shortly after the last battle, and was taken to the hospital at Pretoria, where a few days afterwards he passed away from the scene of battle to where, he hoped, he would be in perpetual peace. It was pleasing to see the people of the district showing their respect to the soldier's memory, and the monument that he was asked to unveil was creditable to them. It would remain as an outward visible sign of their feeling towards their brother who had willingly given his life for his Queen and country. The Union Jack which covered the monument lay very

Queen and country. The Union Jack which covered the monument lay very close to their hearts, and he was sure there were very few who would not take their stand beneath those colors and shed their blood in seeking to preserve their rights and privileges for the benefit of those who were to follow them; but whilst they had this loyal feeling he urged that they should silently pray to God that the war now going on in South Africa may soon come to an end, and that peace may reign over the nation for many years to come.

Rev. Mr. Jackson then unveiled the monument, which is the most striking in the Greta cemetery. It is erected in a prominent position, and stands on a massive pedestal. The upper portion is in the form of a broken column bearing a wreath at the top, and the whole has been carved

out of beautiful white marble, the monument being about ten feet high. On a panel appears the following inscription — "Erected by public subscription to the memory of Private William Petty, who died in Pretoria, South Africa, while serving his Queen and country, December 27, 1900." Aged 23 years. A good comrade and a brave soldier." The design was an excellent choice of the committee, and their order was well fulfilled by the monumental masons, Messrs. Huxley, Parker and Co., of Melbourne.

Mr. ROBERT JEFFREY, who was called upon as one of the oldest residents of the district, said he had known Private Petty from childhood, and he fully shared the pride they all had for him as the only representative of Greta in the war in South Africa. His departure was so hurried that they had no time to publicly bid him good-bye, but it would have been very different if he had had the good fortune to return. It was gratifying to see the late Private Petty's services recognised and his memory perpetuated by the erection of the monument, for it would be an object-lesson to the young people of the district and show them that valuable services for the benefit of one's country are appreciated.

Mr. JOHN B. PETTY said he felt that as father of Private Petty, and therefore closely associated with the day's proceedings, it was incumbent upon him to say a few words. He wished to express the heartfelt gratitude of himself and family for the sympathy shown by the subscribers towards the purchase of the beautiful monument to the memory of their son and brother who had died in the service of his

monument to the memory of their son and brother who had died in the service of his country. In March last year he had left his home and all his social surroundings in the enjoyment of good health and strong, buoyant spirits, to submit himself to the hardships and perils of the battlefield; and he had made that sacrifice because, like a true Britisher, he obeyed the call of his country to take up arms in her defence. It was quite apparent from the tenor of his letters that great hardships were experienced, but while he survived these and providentially escaped the bullets he succumbed to an enemy that shot or shell cannot reach. It was to be hoped that the monument erected to his memory would inspire future generations. The British nation was for ever advancing, and her armies were always in motion, but the thorns would yet be swept aside and peace and happiness reign supreme. The successes of the British were causing a flutter in the camp of other powers, but while no single power could gain supremacy over her there might be combinations, and it behoved the rising generation, therefore, to prepare themselves and be ready, for they knew not how soon they might be wanted to defend even their own hearths and homes.

The National Anthem, Rev. Mr. Jackson leading, was then sung, and the proceedings terminated, the assemblage being thereafter invited to partake of afternoon tea provided by Mrs. Jackson at the vicarage.

The arrangements were well carried out by the committee, who included Mr. J. Findlow (chairman), Rev. Mr. Jackson (treasurer), Messrs. R. Thompson (hon. sec.), G. Wood, G. Bauchop, F. Tanner, A. Adams, H. Sinclair, R. Jeffrey, jun., J. Baird and the late J. Corker.—  
"Chronicle."