

DEATH OF MR. ANDREW PETRIE.

The death of the oldest free resident in our community and colony is an event not to be allowed to happen without notice; and the aged, revered, and useful citizen who has just left our world for a better was no ordinary man. The name of Andrew Petrie is indissolubly connected not only with the early history of Brisbane, but of the colony. Although for some years past incapacitated by a painful malady from active interference in the more prominent duties of life, he never relaxed his interest in all that was going on around him in the colony. For thirty-four years and more he had watched its growth and advancement from the ignoble position of a mere outlying penal settlement of New South Wales to the dignified and important status of an independent province. From 1837 to the time of his death he watched its progress with a solicitude which never flagged—rejoicing in its prosperity, and sorrowing in its adversity. Though long deprived of bodily sight, his mental vision could, nearly to the very last, realise all that had been effected in the way of advancement in the city which has grown up on the comparative waste on which he first landed.

Mr. Petrie was a native of Fifeshire, in Scotland, and was born in June, 1798. In early youth he removed to Edinburgh, where he was connected with an eminent building firm, and served for four years in an architect's establishment in that city. He embarked in business on his own account, and was induced to emigrate to New South Wales in 1831 on the representations of Dr. Lang. Arriving in Sydney in that year in the ship *Stirling Castle*, he was employed in superintending the erection of the Doctor's well-known buildings in Jamison-street, and subsequently entered into business for himself. While thus engaged his ability and probity brought him into notice, and at the solicitation of Mr. Commissioner Leidley, he entered the service of the Government as a Clerk of Works in the Ordnance Department. Shortly afterwards the late Colonel Barney arrived in Sydney with a detachment of the Royal Engineers, and to this officer the control of the department with which Mr. Petrie was connected was transferred, and the deceased gentleman retained his position. In the same capacity he was employed until his removal to Brisbane in 1837. The buildings which had then been erected in the city, and were in course of construction, had been designed and superintended by a junior military officer, and were, naturally enough, not models either of architectural skill or of substantial workmanship. Mr. Petrie was accordingly set up as a practical Superintendent of Works, and he arrived with his family (Mr. John Petrie being then a mere boy) in August, 1837, in the *Jamaica Watt*, the first steamer which ever entered what are now "Queensland waters." His duties were to direct and supervise the labours of the better class of prisoners—mechanics and others—who were employed in an enclosure situated where St. John's school now stands. The wind-mill had been erected, but the machinery could not be made to work, although the sapient military officer had the hatch cut down all round to allow the wind to reach the sails, and Mr. Petrie's first labour was to take down the machinery and set it up again in a proper manner. On his arrival, the only quarters available for himself and family were to be found in the Female Factory (now the police-office), which had been rendered vacant by the removal of the female prisoners to Eagle Farm. There Mr. Petrie resided until the house in which he lived and died was built, and as an instance of his foresight, he insisted on its being erected in a line with the court-house, "as there might some day be a street running that way." The locality was then simply "in the bush."

In 1836, while out on an excursion with Major Cotton, the commandant, Mr. Petrie and his companions were lost for three days, and found their way back to the settlement at last by taking bearings from the hill on the south side of the river, now known as Mount Petrie. In 1840, accompanied by his son John, two or three convicts, and two black boys, the deceased gentleman made an exploring trip into what is now known as the Bunya Bunya country, and the party were in extreme peril of their lives, but they succeeded in bringing back to Brisbane some specimens of the fruit. He was, in fact, the first to discover

succeeded in bringing back to Brisbane some specimens of the fruit. He was, in fact, the first to discover the bunya-bunya tree, although its botanical name, *Araucaria Bidwellii*, does not give him the credit. In 1841, in company with Mr. Henry Stuart Russell, the Hon. Mr. Wriothsley, and others, Mr. Petrie explored the Mary River, which had not before been entered by a boat; and it was while on this expedition that he discovered and brought back to civilization the well-known "Durham Boy," who had been living in a kind of semi-captivity with the blacks for fourteen years. While on one of these exploratory journeys, and once subsequently, Mr. Petrie ascended to the summit of the almost inaccessible Bierwah, the highest of the Glass House Mountains, from whence he took bearings for the assistance of the surveyors who were then commencing a trigonometrical survey. On the latter occasion, Mr. Petrie and his companions struck across the country to Kilooy, which had then been formed as a station for about three days by Sir Evan Macbennet. On his way back to Brisbane, Mr. Petrie met and camped with Mr. David Archer, who was out looking for country, on the site of the present Durundur station.

Soon after the settlement was "thrown open," in 1842, the Governor, Sir George Gipps, visited the settlement in company with Colonel Barney, and the latter endeavoured to persuade Mr. Petrie to return to Sydney, as his office was abolished, but that gentleman preferred remaining here, and trying his chance in what he foresaw would be a flourishing colony. In 1848, while on a trip to the Downs, he suffered severely from an ophthalmic attack, the treatment for which resulted in the loss of his eyesight; and in the same year another calamity befell him in the loss of his son Walter, who was drowned in the creek which crosses Queen-street. (Singularly enough, Mr. John Petrie had a son of the same name, in the same creek, some years afterwards.) Although thus deprived of one of Nature's most valued senses, the deceased gentleman continued for years to assist in the superintendence of buildings and other works, and many residents will remember, even of late years, his daily visits to works in progress.

During the last few years, however, Mr. Petrie's activity of mind had to succumb to infirmity of body, and he was seldom able to leave his own premises. Up to two years ago, blind as he was, he rang the workman's bell with his own hands every morning, and was made acquainted with the details of the business of which he had been the founder.

Mr. Petrie was not a man to obtrude himself upon public notice, but, although he never actively interfered in political and other movements, he could express his views decidedly and vigorously in private. As a father he was kind and indulgent; as an employer he was respected, though strict and watchful; and as a friend and companion he was genial and hearty—nothing pleasing him better than "a chat about old times." Surrounded by all the surviving members of his family, and by a goodly number of grandchildren, he passed peacefully away yesterday afternoon on that last journey in search of final rest which all humanity must one day undertake.—*Courier*, February 21.