

## DEDICATION OF MEMORIAL TABLET.

ROBERT CHARLES HARRIS, J.P.,

AND

ROBERT J. HARRIS, A.I.F.

The dedication of the above tablet took place in St. Matthew's Church, Pantton Hill, at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 15th October. The Venerable Archdeacon Hindley, Administrator of the Diocese, was assisted by Rev. E. S. Chase, the Vicar of the Parish. After the singing of the hymn "Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!" and prayer for peace, a thanksgiving for the departed and a prayer for the mourners having been offered, a Lesson (Wisdom 3, 1-6) was read. The tablet was then unveiled by the Administrator, who said: "On behalf of the Vestry of this Church I receive this tablet for the glory of God and in memory of His servants."

In a very solemn and sympathetic manner, the Archdeacon referred to the work of Robert Charles Harris, as journalist. There were many, he said, to whom no tablet was erected, yet they were all known to God, and their labor of love would be recognised by Him. It was not to us now present that the tablet would speak out, but future generations who worshipped in that Church, or in a more permanent building that might in the future take its place, would be reminded of one who had served his generation faithfully, and it would be an incentive and encouragement to young men to do their duty also. The souls of the righteous were in the hands of God, and there no evil could come to them.

The hymn—

"For all the saints who from their labor's rest,  
Who Thee by faith before the world confessed,  
Thy Name, O Jesu, be for ever blest.

Alleluia!"

was sung by the large congregation that filled the Church, and after the closing verse

"From earth's wide bounds, from ocean's farthest coast,  
Through gates of pearl streams in the countless past,  
Singing to Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Alleluia!"

and the Benediction, an adjournment was made to the Public Hall.

Apologies for absence were then read by the Vicar, who said he deeply regretted the absence of Mr W. McAuliffe, who on account of a brother's serious ill-

ness could not attend, for he was an old friend of Mr Robert Harris, also that of Mr W. Thomas, "The Poplars," Mernda, who had written as follows:—

"Dear Mr Sublet—I am really very sorry that I cannot be with you at the unveiling of the tribute to the memory of my life-long and esteemed friend, the late R. C. Harris. Kindly allow me to say that from personal knowledge I can testify that Mr Harris was in every sense a true man, a sincere friend, and a kind-hearted gentleman whom to know was to love. I knew him well for over 40 years from his first connection with the Evelyn "Observer," and as a constant contributor to that newspaper I ever found Mr Harris all that could be desired, ever conscientious, and as a constant attendant for that long period at the meetings of the Whittlesea Shire Council, of which I was a member all the time. I can speak of the marvellous tact of the deceased as a reporter of the Council's proceedings. Our district suffered a severe loss when Mr Harris passed away, and I earnestly pray that an ever gracious God will sustain and support his bereaved wife and family in this the hour of their trouble, and I will take it as a favor if you will kindly apologise for my absence, which, owing to an engagement to help the Association for the Blind on Saturday, I am unable through that to be present with you. With deep sympathy for all friends in the loss of our dear and much prized friend."

The Hon. W. H. Everard then addressed the meeting. He spoke from intimate knowledge of Mr Harris from the time that he had first come into this district. He had received from him generous support, although they did not at first see eye to eye. He was a man such as the poet Lowell had in mind when he tells us of the word of kindness spoken with cheerfulness in time of need raising the spirits of a fellow man:—

"It may be a glorious thing to write,

Thoughts that shall glad the two or three

High souls, like those bright stars that come in sight

Once in a century;

But better for it is to speak

One simple word, which now and then Shall waken their free nature in the weak And friendless sons of men."

Without thought of self Mr Harris had contributed very largely to the welfare of the whole district. None can tell what it was to him to bear silently the grief of

it was to him to bear silently the grief of the loss of his son, Robert, whose name also they had placed on the tablet yonder in the little Church. We can never do enough for our soldiers who have returned, having in view those who have, like Robert Harris, given their lives for us. We were right in proceeding with the war, but the other fellow thought that he was right also, so it remained to us now to live in peace with all men. This, the season of Spring, is a very fitting time to hold this ceremony, for it is the season of coming brightness and renewal, having promise of better and still better things. And the example set us by the lives which we commemorate to-day should stimulate us to live brighter and more worthy lives, and also do noble deeds.

Mr J. Bell, of Kangaroo Ground, spoke after a friendship with the late Mr Harris from his boyhood, and a friendship with his father before him. He endorsed what had been so fitly said by Archdeacon Hindley and the previous speaker. He thought the tablet a worthy memorial, and he had been gratified that it should be erected to the memory of his friends; they belonged to a family of which any district might be proud.

Mr J. O. Hughes, who was glad again to visit the district where he had spent some of the happiest years, as well as the most strenuous, recurred how Mr Harris had assisted in every movement for the benefit of the people. They had together found, after some careful search, a spot used to this day as a cricket ground, where the ball would not with a moderate stroke commence at once a journey down hill and out of sight. His friend was in every sense a true man, and it was quite impossible there and then to enumerate all that he had done for the welfare of the school and district generally.

It should be noted that it was specially fitting for Mr Hughes to have been present, as after so many years his own work here is not by any means forgotten. If we are not mistaken it was he who kindly gave the site on which the Church now stands.

It must have been a source of gratification to the relatives present, some of whom had come from Kinglake, to know that the life work of their brother and nephew was appreciated by all who knew them, and that this appreciation had found expression in placing a tablet to their memory in the local Church.

The Memorial Brass, which is a beautiful piece of work, was executed by Messrs Norgrove, of Post Office Place, to the order of Mr A. Sublet, who spared no

pains from the day he was appointed hon secretary to the movement to place a memorial in the Church. Great credit is due to him for the manner in which he carried out every detail, and for the result which has crowned his efforts with success.

The tablet, which is handsomely mounted on blackwood, bears the following inscription:—



In Memory of  
 ROBERT CHARLES HARRIS, J.P.  
 1860 1921.  
 Warden of this Church  
 and held in highest esteem  
 by all  
 and his son  
 ROBERT J. HARRIS, A.I.P.  
 1887 1916.  
 The memory of the  
 Just so blessed.

The Vicar said we have present the head of the Church, our representative in Parliament, Mr J. Bell, a lifetime friend, and Mr J. O. Hughes, and we thank them, Mr Sublet, hon. sec., Mr Rodger, hon. treas. We were glad to honor the memory of those who in their lives had honored God. He wished to strike a note of cheer for those lives we commemorated were inspiring examples to ourselves.

Mrs D. Rodger was Church organist, and Mrs Sublet played in the Hall.

The proceedings, which were most impressive throughout, closed by the singing of the National Anthem.

The speakers and relatives were thoughtfully asked by the ladies of the district to partake of a cup of tea before commencing their homeward journey.

The following letter was received and read by the chairman, the audience spontaneously signifying their endorsement of the same:—"Hurstbridge, 15-10-21, Mr Sublet, Panton Hill. Dear Sir,—Being unable to attend the ceremony this afternoon, I would like you to apologise for my absence. The late Mr R. Harris was a man who was always held in the highest esteem by me, having known him from my early childhood. He was a man of sterling character, and one of Nature's gentlemen.—Yours faithfully, (Signed)

gentlemen.—Yours faithfully, (Signed)  
James J. Mills."