

Yarra Glen School

UNVEILING OF JOSEPH FURPHY MEMORIAL.

The unveiling of a bronze tablet in memory of Joseph Furphy (Tom Collins), author of "Such is Life," "Rigby's Romance," and a collection of poems, took place in the Yarra Glen school on Saturday last when, in addition to about 150 local residents, 100 relatives, friends and admirers of Furphy's work attended, many coming from distant parts of the State. The Furphy family was represented by Mrs. Stewart (sister of Joseph Furphy and the only surviving member of the family), Mesdames Bryden, Cracknell, Prescott Jackson and Miss Vera Stewart (nieces), Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Hepburn (grand nieces), Mr. Harry Furphy (nephew), and Messrs. A. W. and W. R. Furphy (sons of Mr. Ross Furphy, who was a nephew of John Furphy).

The tablet, splendidly executed by Mr. Wallace Anderson, of Surrey Hills, was the result of the efforts of Miss Kate Baker, a friend of the author, and at one time a State school teacher. During the past four months she has been energetically working with Mr. Pascoe, the head teacher of the Yarra Glen school, in an endeavor to establish the fact that Joseph Furphy was born at Yarra Glen in 1843, his father's house standing on the exact spot where the school now stands. Joseph Furphy's letter to his mother, written in 1889 when he re-visited Yarra Glen, firmly establishes that fact.

Some time ago a splendid committee of Yarra Glen residents was formed, appointing Mr. J. W. Lawrey president and Mr. Pascoe secretary, and the co-operation of all concerned resulted in the fulfilment of Miss Baker's great desire to have the memorial erected. Much publicity had been given to the movement by the Sydney "Bulletin" and Mrs. Nellie Palmer, of Kolorama. It is interesting to note that the Henry Lawson Society (Mr. A. J. Sullivan), the Lindsay Gordon Society (Mrs. G. Hunter vice-president, and Mr. J. K. Moir) and the Victorian Historical Society (Messrs. G. Hyne and J. K. Moir) were represented.

After the singing of the National Anthem Nellie Darby, a small girl of the school, presented bouquets to Mrs. Stewart, Miss Baker and Mrs. Palmer.

Mr. Lawrey, the president, in his opening address expressed pleasure at seeing such a large attendance, and referred to the Furphy family being so splendidly represented, all having come to do honor to one of Australia's writers.

Mr. James McRae, Director of Education, who next addressed the gathering, dwelt upon the signifi-

Education, who next addressed the gathering, dwelt upon the significance of the fact that the tablet should be placed in the school, where all who passed through it in years to come would learn some of Furphy's history and be taught to appreciate the sentiment of Australian writers. Although Furphy's books were not so well known as they might be, there was a time coming when Australian literary men and women would be more honored for their contributions to literature. His concluding remarks referred to one of Furphy's poems, "The School House on the Plain," which he recited to the assembly.

Others who spoke were Mr. R. H. Croll, who expressed his gratitude to those responsible for the memorial;

Mr. Vance Palmer, who performed the unveiling ceremony; Mr. A. J. Sullivan, who represented the Henry Lawson Society; Mr. W. H. Everard, M.L.A.; Mr. Gilbert Wallace, editor of the Education department's publications; Mr. F. F. Macartney, who contributed an article on Joseph Furphy's writings in "The Bulletin" on September 5; and Professor Hebner of Bonn University, Germany.

During the proceedings Mrs. Norman Allen, of Yarra Glen, sang with feeling "A Christmas Hymn," the words of which were written by Joseph Furphy. One of his poems, "Breaking the News," was splendidly recited by Joan Brunt, a pupil of the school.

An interesting part of the ceremony was the reading of messages from notable literary people who could not be present, Mrs. Nettie Palmer reading, with deep feeling, a message from Miss Miles Franklin, of Carlton, N.S.W. Mr. Pascoe also read messages from Mrs. E. Coulson Davidson (Oakleigh), Mr. R. A. Broinowski (The Senate, Canberra), Mr. Victor Kennedy (Brisbane), Mr. F. Dolby Davidson (Sydney), Mr. S. D. Thompson (secretary of the Educational Workers' Association, Melbourne), and Mr. B. R. Smith (Richmond).

Apologies for inability to attend were received from approximately 70 people.

At the conclusion of the ceremony the guests were entertained at afternoon tea.