

THE LATE MR. G. P. MERRY

Memorial Gates Opened.

CITIZENS' TRIBUTE.

The Merry Memorial gates leading to the grounds of the Neil-street Methodist Church were opened by the Mayor yesterday morning. The gathering of citizens was large, and there were several representatives of wartime organisations present, together with the church choir and children. Proceedings commenced with the singing of the hymn, "O God our help in ages past," a small portable organ being used for the accompaniment.

Rev. D. S. Brumwell then reviewed the history of the citizens' tribute to the late Mr. G. P. Merry, O.B.E. He said that perhaps few things had shaken the city of Toowoomba as did the sad news, which spread rapidly on October 30 of 1918 year, that George William Merry had suddenly passed away after a short and sharp illness. Many

felt that they had lost a true friend, and all knew that the city had lost a good citizen. Every section of the community felt the loss, for Mr. Merry was not only a good citizen, but was a very fine type of churchman. The response that came to the appeal for funds to raise this permanent memorial, and the large gathering that had assembled that morning, were but an evidence of this fact. At the time of Mr. Merry's death, a suggestion was made that those who admired him for his worth as a citizen, and those who respected him as a churchman, might combine to raise a memorial that should stand for many years to perpetuate his memory. A committee was formed at once, comprising the following gentlemen:—Alderman James Tolmie (representing the West Toowoomba bowlers), Mr. E. Sinclair (representing the Chamber of Commerce and the Sock and Comfort Fund), Mr. G. Godsall (representing the Toowoomba Gas Co. Ltd.), Mr. W. C. Peak (representing the Toowoomba Ambulance), the Rev. D. S. Brumwell and Mr. Geo. Jones (representing the trustees of the Methodist Church). This committee set to work immediately to raise the necessary funds for the memorial. It did not prove to be a hard

raise the necessary funds for the memorial. It did not prove to be a hard task, for all sections of the community were ready and willing to subscribe to so worthy an object. The committee soon agreed that the most fitting way by which they could perpetuate his memory would be by raising that which was now seen completed, a substantial fence with memorial gates at the entrance to the church where he worshipped Sabbath by Sabbath and of which property he was the trust secretary for 30 years. The committee called in Mr. Douglas F. Roberts, architect and builder, and asked him to prepare designs for the work with an approximate estimate of the cost. As a result of a circular letter sent out and the very kindly assistance of the Toowoomba "Chronicle" the sum of £312/11/ was very soon in hand. It was then thought advisable to hand this amount, with the suggested designs, over to the trustees of the Methodist Church, with the request that they undertake the task of completing the work in such a manner as would be in harmony with the general architecture of the church building. This had now been done, and that morning they were honoured in having with them his Worship the Mayor to unveil the memorial tablets and officially open the gates. Before asking his Worship the Mayor to perform this important ceremony, Mr. Brumwell said it was fitting that he should, as the minister of the church, make some acknowledgment for the kindness of those who had assisted them to make this very handsome addition to their property, and to perpetuate the memory of one of the most diligent church officials they have had by a memorial on the property that was so near to his heart. A good deal of the success of the scheme was due to the committee that set to work so quickly and willingly to raise the necessary funds, and prepare the foundations for the completion of the work. To the Toowoomba "Chronicle," without whose assistance it would have been a very difficult and costly thing to have obtained the publicity that was necessary for such a venture thanks were due. The editor of the "Chronicle" had assisted very greatly, publishing subscription lists and giving free advertisement whenever asked for. The directors of the Empire Theatre, whose property adjoined were among the first to send them a handsome donation of £25, and in addition to this, at a later date, they erected a dividing wall between

erected a dividing wall between the two properties, for which they paid the total cost. This made a very fine

finish to the original work. Most, if not all, those who had been called upon to do anything in connection with the work had done so without any profit to themselves. The Toowoomba Electric Light Co. Ltd. had been responsible for the two electric light standards; Messrs. B. C. Zeigler and Sons had cut and engraved the marble tablets, all of which had been done without any profit, only the cost of the material and time being charged. Some had given money, some had given time and thought, some had given material; and with the combination of these they had been able to complete the work at a cost of about £350, leaving a small debt of under £50, which it was hoped would be met by the generosity of those who had not yet subscribed. He could not close without acknowledging the debt of gratitude to Dr. Aeneas McDonnell, who had taken a personal interest in all that was done. They owed a good deal to Dr. McDonnell for the valuable advice given; he had been very willing to assist at all times. There had been very many difficulties to contend with, but Mr. Douglas F. Roberts, who designed and executed the work, had been able to overcome them all. The trustees of the church left the work very largely in the hands of Mr. Roberts who had done his part without any profit to himself. He thought all were proud of the handsome design and work which would now remain as a very fitting memorial to one whom many loved as a brother and all admired as a worthy Christian gentleman.

The Mayor said he was proud that morning to represent the city of Toowoomba on the occasion of the unveiling of the tablets and opening of the gates, in memory of the late Mr. George Pitlow Merry. Personally, he was a slightly younger generation than that which grew up with Mr. Merry, but he could testify to the wonderful ability which Mr. Merry displayed at all times in handling matters of a civic nature. He had also pleasure in testifying to the very excellent reputation that Mr. Merry had as a business man. In that connection he had perhaps heard in his early days more of Mr. Merry than of any other man in business in Toowoomba. He felt that Mr. Merry was one who did not take for his slogan a phrase that was sometimes very obnoxious—

that was sometimes very obnoxious—the term "Business is Business." Mr. Merry tempered business with very kindly thoughts for the "other fellow"; and in going up the hill of prosperity it caused him keen regret if he saw any coming down. Mr. Merry's sincere wish was that all should advance together. In the memorial were linked up remembrances of the very many little acts of kindness which Mr. Merry did during his life. Mr. Merry rendered valuable service to the community during the war, for which he was awarded the O.B.E. The Mayor then unveiled the tablets (which had been shrouded with the Union Jack and the Australian flag) and opened the gates expressing the belief that those who entered would find the spiritual comfort they sought. The tablets, which are of black marble in Gothic design, contain the following inscriptions in gilt letters:—

"This wall and gates were erected by his fellow citizens to the memory of George Pitlow Merry, O.B.E., a devoted member and trustee of this church and a highly esteemed citizen, who died on October 30, 1924."

"Many shall commend his understanding. His memorial shall not depart away and his name shall live from generation to generation. The memory of the just is blessed."

Mr. R. Sinclair, President of the Chamber of Commerce, in moving a vote of thanks to the Mayor, said that Mr. Merry's work in the Chamber of Commerce was invaluable. Everyone knew what Mr. Merry did for the Sock and Comfort and other funds during the war. Mr. Merry was a really good and kindly citizen and he was very pleased that the people of Toowoomba had erected the memorial.

Ald. H. G. Webb, as one of the church trustees, seconded the motion.

The proceedings concluded with the singing of the Doxology.