

THE LATE MISS CROKER. IN MEMORIAM.

That the good a good woman does, lives after her, was well illustrated on Wednesday afternoon, when, in the presence of a small but very appreciative and representative number of this community, the Mayor of Bourke (Ald. Faithfull) performed the ceremony of unveiling the beautiful monument erected by public subscription in grateful memory of the late Miss Catherine Croker, who, after several years of active unselfish charity and benevolence in Bourke, was taken from us after a brief illness two and a half years ago, and now lies at rest in the cemetery where so many of our dearest and best are also sleeping. For some time previous to her lamented death Miss Croker lived at the Royal Hotel, where her manifold true womanly qualities of heart and mind so endeared her to Mr. and Mrs. Moses, as to everyone whose privilege it was to know her sterling worth, that, with a view to perpetuate her memory—a memory still embalmed in the minds and hearts of all able to distinguish the true note of real, unselfish, not-for-profit charity,—they decided to erect a suitable monument over the grave where the sturdy, resolute, bright-hearted little woman is at rest. To do this effectively Mr. Moses invited the co-operation of the public, and, to their credit be it said, a large number of the residents of the town and district readily responded. When sufficient funds were collected to justify the expenditure, Mr. Moses, who was in Sydney at the time, placed an order with the well-known monumental masons, Taylor Bros., for a monument of very handsome, artistic design, at a cost approaching £40. Mr. Moses personally attended to the completion of the order and the dispatch of the monument to Bourke where he also made all arrangements for its solid erection in the cemetery, while at the same time seeing that the grave was enclosed by a substantial iron railing. An idea of the stability of the monument will be gathered from the fact that it weighed 2½ tons and stands firmly embedded on its granite pedestal, built on crests lengths of railway iron laid upon 18 inches of solid concrete. Mr. F. Sharp, under Mr. Moses' supervision, successfully carried out the erection, and Mr. C. Pacey kindly gave his services in the good work and did all necessary painting and leveling free of charge. All being thus satisfactorily completed, Mr. Moses arranged for a formal unveiling of the monument and at the general request the Mayor kindly consented to perform the ceremony. Accordingly at half-past 4 on Wednesday the Mayor and several other prominent citizens, including the Revs. T. Morgan and J. Bathgate, Mr. and Mrs. Moses, Messrs. H. M. Salenger, D. Gray, P. J. Nash, P. J. Foley, and others stood reverently round Miss Croker's grave, while appropriate addresses were delivered. The Mayor said the purpose of the gathering was to finally complete the work undertaken by the friends of the deceased lady who desired to perpetuate her memory. Miss Croker had for many years prior to her regretted death been a conspicuous figure in every charitable and benevolent work in Bourke, and had never tired of assisting to alleviate pain and suffering. In losing her the hospital had lost its most zealous worker, to whom the cry of suffering humanity never appealed in vain, and in unveiling that handsome memorial, he was pleased to feel that so long as Bourke lasted that stately monument would continue an enduring testimony of their grateful recollection and appreciation of the sterling little woman whose life was spent in good works in our midst. As an official of the Mechanics' Institute, Miss Croker had done more than anyone else to convert it from a carefully

Institute. Miss Croker had done more than anyone else to convert it from a carefully shunned institution into one of popular resort. Truly her life had set a good example, and in paying her the well-earned tribute of respect shown by the ceremonial in which they were that day engaged, he (the Mayor) felt and hoped that it would act as an incentive to others among them to emulate the good deeds and worthy zeal and charity of Catherine Croker, who had passed to her eternal reward. The Mayor then removed the veil, disclosing a beautifully finished marble monument bearing the following inscription: "In memory of CATHERINE CROKER, died 22nd February, 1898, aged 45 years. At rest. Erected by her many friends in token of her universal charity and good works."

From its stained granite base to the lacquered urn standing on a clean cut stone bible on the summit, also shrouded in delicate fretwork, the monument is a triumph of skill and good taste, reflecting credit on the designer and the sculptor, and is certainly one of the most perfect and appropriate of the many, alas, how many, memorials adorning the cemetery.

Appropriate addresses were also delivered by the Revs. T. Morgan and J. Bathgate the former remarking that he recollected Miss Croker's arrival in Bourke and was with her in her last illness. He was pleased to be present at that tribute of respect to her memory. Though small in stature the deceased was a woman of great heart which was ever throbbing with compassion for human suffering. Her charity was universal and the hospital was her special care. If the aggregate amount raised through her own efforts on behalf of the hospital were written down, it would astonish them. It appeared impossible for Miss Croker to be content unless she was doing something to alleviate affliction and distress. She was even too active-souled and literally wore herself out by her exertions. Her life was one of constant sacrifice of self and she devoted all her time and strength to the cause of charity and good works. The dead were remembered only on account of the work, good or evil, of their lives, and certainly in Miss Croker's case there was naught but good to remember, and her memory was like a sweet perfume pleasant to recall. Their grateful recollection of her was substantially illustrated by that beautiful monument and the example of her useful life could never be forgotten in Bourke.

Mr. H. M. Salenger, vice-president of the Mechanics Institute, also paid a glowing tribute to the good work done by the late Miss Croker for the benefit of that institution, and testified to the general esteem and admiration in which she was held.

Mr. S. S. Moses expressed his deep satisfaction at the way in which the Bourke people had manifested their reverence and esteem for Miss Croker, and his gratitude to the Mayor and the other gentlemen present at the completion of what had been to him a labour of love. For two or three years before her death, Miss Croker had resided at the Royal hotel, and it was only those who were in the same house with her who could fully appreciate her many beautiful qualities and ardent love of charity. She dearly loved and was dearly beloved by little children, for whose pleasure she considered no trouble too great. Indeed it was due largely to her self-sacrificing labors on their behalf and her constant works of charity that her strength collapsed. Only the day before she died, when it appeared that her life would be spared, and he and Mrs. Hatten had arranged to send her away for a rest in a better climate than Bourke, she demanded that she should be allowed to arrange a children's ball before she left. Next day she died. In conjunction with her other friends, he had thought it only right to perpetuate her memory in solid stone, and everyone whom he asked for assistance readily contributed to the erection of the

monument, and everyone whom he asked for assistance readily contributed to the erection of the monument unveiled that day, and which cost upwards of £50. Two young girls had volunteered to collect subscriptions, and in a couple of days collected five or six pounds in small amounts. A balance sheet would be published in a few days, showing the exact receipts and expenditure. He sincerely deplored the death of Miss Croker, whose life had been an object lesson to them all, and again thanked the subscribers generally for the way in which they had assisted him to honor the memory of a good woman.

This concluded the interesting ceremony, and with a farewell glance at the monument and the tenderly and neatly kept grave, the visitors departed.