

## LATE LIEUT. J. W. ANNAT.

### UNVEILING THE TABLET.

THE ceremony of unveiling the tablet erected by his late comrades in Warwick to the memory of Lieutenant J. W. Annat, who lost his life at Eland's River, South Africa, on 6th August last, was performed in the Presbyterian Church on Thursday evening. Shortly before 8 o'clock the members of "A" Co., Mounted Infantry (under command of Captain Evans and Lieuts. Fleming and Clowes) and "L" Co., Q. Rifles (Lieuts. De Conlay, Sergeant, and Kowland), who had assembled at the drill-shed, filed into the church, the centre seats having been reserved for their accommodation. And when, a few minutes later, the Rev. R. Kerr opened the proceedings with prayer, the sacred edifice was completely filled by a thoroughly representative congregation, who joined with one accord in the singing of the well-known hymn, "O worship the King all glorious above." The reading of a Scripture lesson was followed by another hymn, "Brief Life is here our portion," after which a short sermon was preached by the rev. gentleman.

The Rev. Mr. Kerr took for his text Colossians iv., 17—"Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, (that thou fulfil it.)" These words, he said, might have been intended as a warning or a reproof, but he was inclined to think there was a combination of both elements in the counsel given. The passage had been suggested to him by the event which like a magnet had drawn them together that night, and they had inspired a line of thought which he trusted would prove helpful. In the first place, he emphasised the honor that was attached to service; indeed, to put it stronger, he maintained that it was more noble to serve than to be served. That was the very essence of the Gospel in which they all believed, for the Son of Man came into the world not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He whose memory they had met together to honour was one who showed his preparedness to do service for others. In the second place, as a corollary, every man had his especial ministry to perform, though perhaps they did not realise it as they should. No man was born into the world whose work was not born with him. The last thought was that they should "take heed to the ministry, to fulfil it." The man who knew how to do a thing and yet failed to do it was worthy of contempt. He thought they would realise that he spoke in this fashion because they had assembled together to pay a tribute to the memory of a brave comrade—the late Lieut. Annat, who fell on the 6th August last. Lieut. Annat's work—his ministry, his service—was known to them all. He (the preacher) had only had about two hours' conversation with him, at Townsville, some two years ago; but his hearers had known him well, and it would therefore be unbecoming of him to remind them of the story of the late officer's life, or to detail the circumstances under which he fell. But they would allow him to say of the late Lieut. Annat, as he might say of every brave comrade, that his life was not perfect; but his comrades in Warwick, by erecting the tablet in the church of which the deceased officer had been a member, were cherishing the memory of a man who was every inch a soldier, and who, in the face of danger and death, died while nobly doing his duty. The poet had said that the good that men do is buried with them; the evil lives after them. He would ask them to reverse that judgment. Let them enter the

the evil lives after them. He would ask them to reverse that judgment. Let them enter the evil, and make the good only survive, and lift up their hearts to Him who was Master of them all, so that at last they would have the reward of the faithful, "Well done, enter into the joy of thy Lord."

The congregation again joined in the singing of the hymn commencing—

When the day of toil is done,  
When the race of life is run,  
Father, grant Thy warriors  
Rest for evermore.

Lieut.-Colonel Venn King, at the request of the Rev. R. Kerr, then stepped forward for the purpose of unveiling the tablet, which, covered by the Union Jack, occupied a central position on the northern wall of the church. Colonel King said he had been deputed by the late Lieut. Annat's comrades in Warwick to perform this sad task. He referred to the gallantry displayed by the late officer, not only in the present campaign, but also in the Boer war of 1899, and was pleased to see such an evidence of esteem and respect from the men under his command. Also, he regarded it as a token of sympathy with the widow and children in their bereavement. This memorial service, he said, taken in conjunction with the letter just received by Mrs. Annat from her late Majesty the Queen, would serve to mitigate the pain and grief she felt at the loss of her late husband. (Col. King here read a copy of the letter referred to, which, written in the late Queen's characteristically sympathetic tone, requested the favor of a portrait of the late Lieut. Annat). Continuing, the speaker felt assured that the sympathy expressed in that letter was only what all the late officer's comrades felt. They all deeply regretted his death, but they derived a feeling of pride from the reflection that he fell so nobly, in a siege in which 400 colonials held at bay for 11 days 3000 Boers armed with powerful artillery. The Colonel concluded his remarks by reading a graphic description of the Elands River siege, and a warm eulogy on the members of the gallant garrison, from the pen of Conan Doyle.

Major H. G. Chauvel, who recently returned from South Africa, said he had not come prepared to make any remarks, but he would like to express his appreciation of the motive that prompted the erection of the tablet. It was a pleasure to reflect that while they were absent on duty their comrades at home had not forgotten them. He was not present at Elands River when Lieut. Annat fell, but the gallantry of the Australians on that occasion was in every man's mouth. It was proposed by some of the officers in South Africa to erect a monument in Pretoria to the memory of the brave men who fell at Eland's River; but Pretoria was a long way off, and it was gratifying to know that Lieut. Annat's memory had been perpetuated in this manner by his own comrades in his own church and in his own town.

Quartermaster-Sergt. Mabbutt, who was present at Eland's River during that memorable siege, and who had journeyed from Brisbane in order to join in the tribute to Lieut. Annat's memory, said he was a very old comrade of the deceased officer. In fact, 10 years ago Lieut. Annat was his drill-instructor, and it was only natural that the old feelings of friendship between them should have been revived and strengthened during the campaign. As a man and a soldier and an officer it was impossible to have found a better; and as for courage, wherever there was danger, there would Annat be found. Instances of the late officer's courage were cited, and the speaker then referred to incidents connected with the siege at Eland's River. The assertion that no pickets had been posted that night was, he said, incorrect. The garrison had built up a huge fire

been posted that night was, he said, incorrect. The garrison had built up a huge fire that might have been seen for miles, and they were indulging in a sing-song that might have been heard many more miles; but they little dreamt that they were giving a picnic to the Boers. The latter opened fire on the British camp with a 15-pounder, and the irony of the thing was that the gun was a British one—it had been lost in a previous engagement. He then referred to the effects of the artillery fire in that laager only 160 yds. square; to the hopes that were rudely shattered when General Carrington, with a relief force of 1500, withdrew from the scene; and to the cheering influence of Lieut. Annet under all circumstances. Annet, he said, was really the mainstay of that garrison. He then related how Annet was wounded by a rifle bullet through nonchalantly raising his head above one of the shelter sconces; but he treated the wound lightly, and after having it dressed was again on

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duty. Then the narrator began to tell of the fatal shell, and his tone, hitherto bright and magnetic, grew unusually grave. It was the last shell fired by the Boers that day, and poor Annet was badly hit. He (the speaker) assisted to carry him in, but he remained conscious for about five minutes only, and soon afterwards succumbed. He was pleased to know that Warwick friends of the gallant officer had, in the erection of the tablet, shown their sympathy and appreciation.

Here the choir sang those beautiful lines of Tennyson's—"Crossing the Bar"—after which the Rev. Mr. Kerr reminded his hearers that, by events like those just enacted, they were taking part in the making of history; those coming after them would read, and by reading would have their pulses quickened. And they were all privileged in taking part in that night's proceedings, especially when they heard one of the late officer's comrades telling in simple but graphic language the story of those eleven thrilling days. They would go home saddened, but yet glad of heart, for they would leave those who had gone to Him who was over all, praying that He would enable them to do their duty as they had done, and meet Him face to face.

"For ever with the Lord" was then sung, and, the benediction having been pronounced, the congregation remained standing while the Dead March was played on the organ, afterwards reverently filing out to the strains of a solemn dirge played by Piper M'Coist. The military companies marched back to the drillshed, and were there dismissed.

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