

OPENING OF THE NEW CHURCH ON THE ESTATE OF THE A. A. COMPANY.

On the 2nd instant, the Bishop of Newcastle arrived in Gloucester, which is at present the head cattle station of the Australian Agricultural Company, and proceeded to the residence of Mr. Charles H. Green, J.P., assistant general superintendent of the company, whose guest he was on the occasion.

The object of the Bishop's visit was to open the church which, for the past four or five months, has been in course of erection. On the morning of the 4th, at eleven o'clock, the Bishop, accompanied by Mr. Green, the Rev. W. Simms, the company's chaplain, and the Rev. Mr. Hawkins, of the Manning River district, entered the edifice. The Bishop and the Rev. Mr. Hawkins proceeded to within the communion rails. The chaplain at once commenced morning service by giving out the 100th Psalm, which was sung by a devout congregation, as were also the stanzas and hymns, Mrs. Green presiding at the instrument, and effectively leading the whole assemblage, which filled the new church. The interest of the occasion was much enhanced by the rite of confirmation being administered to five young persons. The Bishop, who appeared to be in good health, preached in his usual eloquent and affectionate manner, from the 15th chapter of Exodus, and the 2nd verse. The communion was administered to fourteen or fifteen persons, and nearly £10 were collected.

At two o'clock, a large company assembled in a tent, which was very tastefully decorated with evergreens and a great variety of national flags, to partake of the hospitality of Mr. and Mrs. Green. The usual grace before meat, which begins "Be present at our table, Lord," &c., having been sung by the whole company, each one proceeded to refresh himself with the good things so liberally provided. The repast being ended, the Bishop made a brief address in which he offered the united thanks of the members of the Church, first to those shareholders of the company by whose liberality the church so much needed been erected; to the general superintendent for the interest he had taken in promoting the object, and to Mr. Green for superintending the erection, as also for his kind hospitality on the present occasion. As the best compliment which the people could make to their good friends, the Bishop urged on all to attend the church regularly that they might through the goodness of the Almighty be ready at last for their everlasting home.

The assembly dispersed, the male portion bending their steps towards the cricket ground when they enjoyed for some hours this manly game; and the females soon discovered a delightful shade, where they were seen indulging their innocent games and frolics to the great delight of the old folks, some of whom we observed could not resist this joyful opportunity of trying at least, a game which had given them much delight in the good old country in days now long passed away.

It had been arranged to have evening service at seven o'clock, at which hour the congregation assembled, when prayers were offered in a very devotional manner by the Rev. Mr. Hawkins, and the Chaplain preached from Exodus xli. 26 and 27. The proceedings of this happy day which will long be remembered in the district were brought to a close by our indefatigable assistant general superintendent letting off some splendid fireworks to the evident delight of the young and, if I mistake not, some persons of graver years and positions, were overheard warmly eulogising the success of the closing exhibition.

As the church, which was opened, is a perfect model both in style and finish, it may not be uninteresting to give the following brief description of the edifice.

It is of brick 34 x 22 feet outside the walls, 12 feet high from floor to fascia boards: the foundation is carried well above the ground and ventilation secured by means of gratings let into the foundation, and underneath the floor level. The quoins, round the door and windows are worked with stucco, in imitation of stone work. The roof, which is very steep, runs over the walls, with a 12 inch projection of eaves, finished off with soffits and fascia boards, supported by 12 inch G. C. cant lavers. The back and front of the roof is finished in the same style, and the apex ornamented with a fleur de lis. The entrance by three steps is through a double door with Gothic panels. The church inside is 30 feet x 18 feet; the walls being in stucco, rise 12 feet from the floor to the foot of a handsome cornice, from which springs a cove shaped roof, the rafters being lined with cedar boards, matched together. The walls are tied by two beams, made with cedar, the beams being supported by curved brackets resting on supports let into the walls. The windows are lancet-headed: the upper portions from spring of the arch being coloured in diaphane, in imitation of stained glass. The east window is centered with "The adoration of the Magi," supported on each side by large figures of St. Peter and St. Paul. The colouring in this beautiful process is equal to that of any stained glass, and indeed it would be difficult to discover that so much effect was produced by so much cheaper a process. Over the door is a beautiful representation of "The Resurrection." The side windows contain the four evangelists, and the angels having the everlasting Gospel. Rev. xlv. 6. At the east end is a raised platform, surmounted by a very neat rail enclosing the communion, on the north of which stands a neatly-executed reading desk or pulpit, the panels being lancet; the seats and all the fittings are of cedar, and in strict keeping with the gothic style of the church. The interior looks both neat and handsome, and while it reflects the greatest credit on Mr. Coleman, the builder, does equally so on Mr. Green, who has the honour of being both the architect and superintendent of works. The church is to be enclosed with a suitable fence, the Bishop as an expression of his pleasure, and satisfaction at the completion of so neat a church, having promised Mr. Green the sum of ten pounds towards this object. It may here be added that Mr. Arthur Hodgson, general superintendent, has presented a very handsome communion plate, which he procured from England. The Commandment tablets and all the diaphanic representations are the gifts of Mr. Charles H. Green. The chaplain has given the large Bible and prayer-book, used in Divine service.

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December 5.—The Bishop, accompanied by the same, left Gloucester for Sydney very early this morning to hold a confirmation service at 3 o'clock p.m. On this occasion the church was well filled. He baptised an adult Jew, and also administered the rite of confirmation to fifteen young persons. The Bishop took for his text on this occasion the 10th and 11th verses of the first chapter of the 2nd Peter, and urged in most affectionate terms the momentous importance of giving all diligence to the subject of the Gospel.

The weather is now more favourable for getting in the harvest. Reapers are to be seen on every side busily at their work.

I am sorry to have to state that a poor fellow named Michael M'Mahon, was found dead on the road this morning. He leaves a widow and nine children, the eldest of whom is lame. Drink, it is reported, has been the cause of another poor soul being instantaneously launched into an awful eternity.—Communicated.