

ST. MARK'S CHURCH, REMUERA, AUCKLAND.

PAST AND PRESENT.



REMUERA is by general consent considered the prettiest of the suburbs around Auckland. The name originally given by the natives to Mount Hobson and the country round it is now applied to the district extending from Hobson's Bay on the north to the Manukau Road and Market Road on the south, and including the greater part of what is now the Remuera Highway District, together with a portion of the Epsom and One Tree Hill Highway Districts, and the

area of the Junction Hill, Mr Dilworth's, Mr Edwin Heaketh's, and Mr Murdoch's residences, and Mount St. John. It is traversed from east to west by the road to the Tamaki, which, keeping on a high level round the foot of Mount Hobson, commands charming views over the slopes leading down to the sea, with the North Head, the entrance to the harbour, Rangitoto, and Orakei Point beyond, and with Cape Colville and the Barrier Islands visible in the distance. The whole has long been enclosed and well cultivated, dotted over with pretty homesteads and the more pretentious mansions of the wealthier inhabitants, each with its garden, pleasure grounds, and orchards, interspersed with grass paddocks, and thickly planted with trees. There is perhaps more variety in these plantations than elsewhere about Auckland. Several patches of native bush have been preserved on Mr Shipperd's (now Mr Dilworth's) estate. Mr W. S. Graham, the original owner of the land between the Portland Road and the district school, took care many years ago to have it planted with totara, karaka, and pohutukawa, intermixed with a few English trees, and Mr Newman has also some totara that are attaining a good size. Still, it is admitted that the pines insignis and macrocarpa are too predominant. In this respect Auckland compares unfavourably with Dunedin and Christchurch. At Dunedin the native vegetation of the town belt has been preserved almost intact instead of being ruined (like the Auckland Domain) with pines and poplars, while at Christchurch the variety of foliage in summer gives a charm to the place, which compensates for the tame flatness of the site.

There can be no doubt that the predominance of pine and cypress gives a triste and sombre character to the landscape about Auckland (especially in summer time when the grass has lost its green) little in keeping with its sunny skies and sparkling waters. However, as has been said, there is perhaps greater variety in Remuera than elsewhere in Auckland, and it is to be hoped that a better taste may prevail in the future even there, and the age of pines in due time come to an end as the age of bluegums has done before it.

The first opening of the land at Remuera for settlement dates from the great native meeting in 1844, under Governor Fitzroy, held in the fields lying a little to the south-east of Mount Hobson. At this meeting it was agreed that the Ngati-whata who lived at Kaipara, and also at Orakei, should with the consent of Te Wherowhero of the Waikato natives, sell their land direct to Europeans. The pre-emptive right of the Queen was waived by the Governor, and a fee of 10s an acre levied by the Government on the transaction. In this way a beginning of settlement was made, and the first purchasers—Mr George Graham, Mr Dilworth, Mr Shipperd, Mr Newman, Mr Rutherford, Mr S. A. Wood, and perhaps a few others—secured properties which subsequently, by their owners' energy, labour and expense, afterwards became of considerable value. Captain Kelly (Registrar of Deeds), Mr W. S. Graham, Mr Keir, and Mr Baber followed soon after as purchasers.

In 1856 a large addition was made to the land open for settlement by the Government purchase of the whole of the promontory running down from the Tamaki Road to Morrin's Point. The price had by this time risen considerably. Mr Dilworth purchased 51 acres from Mr Graham for £850, and about £25 per acre was obtained for the best sites. But, though sold, the land was little built upon for some time. Mr Christmas's (original owner of Morrin's Point), Captain Chapman's, and the late Mr Greenaway's (now Melrose Hall, the property of Mr Edward Wilby), being the first houses erected there. By degrees, in the prosperous times of the war, some of the leading merchants, especially Messrs David, Robert, and John Graham, and Mr Archibald Clark, and Sir George Arney, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of New Zealand, found their way out to Remuera, and built good houses on and near the main road, among which may be mentioned the 'Tower,' now owned by Mr J. McCosh Clark. To the south and at the foot of the slope of Mount St. John, stood the residence of Mr

James Dilworth, which has now been removed, and in its stead, but upon the same site, there stands a handsome two-story mansion surrounded by numerous fine specimens of Norfolk Island pine, as also specimens of the native kamri, rimu, totara, etc.

In the time of depression, which followed the removal of the seat of government to Wellington, many properties changed hands, and though there was a slow gradual growth in the population, there was no marked increase until the opening of the railway in 1876, and better times encouraged the subdivision of the larger properties. Mr Hunt, of the

The little church, of which we give a view, was built in the early days of the settlement, in 1846 or 1847, by Bishop Selwyn, who bought the land (one acre) from Mr George Graham for £2, presumably a fair advance on the original purchase. This acre, together with an additional piece on the eastern side, generously given by Mr Dilworth, and fenced and planted by him, now forms St. Mark's churchyard. The design of the church was made by the Rev. F. Thatcher in the same style as the chapel at St. John's College at Tamaki and St. Barnabas's Church, which formerly stood on the point between Mechanics' and St. George's Bays, but is now removed to Mount Eden. The framing of the original St. Mark's Church was all prepared at St. John's College by Mr A. H. Hunter, the Bishop's builder, and put up with the assistance of the young men (English and Maori) under instruction at the College. It was originally thatched with wheaten straw from the College farm. It held about seventy or eighty people. It was removed when the new church (of which we also give a view) was built to the corner of the Remuera and Brighton roads, where the greater part of it may still be seen used as a school and parish room.

The church was first served by the young clergy at St. John's College, with the Bishop, and after a time the Rev. W. St. Hill was appointed resident clergyman, with the charge of a school in the neighbourhood. Upon his departure for Hawke's Bay in 1856 he was succeeded by the Rev. George Kingdon, who built the nave of the present building, and also the old-fashioned house adjoining the churchyard, now occupied by Major Pirie, as a residence for himself. In connection with the opening of this new nave a circumstance happened which shows very forcibly how Bishop Selwyn was in the habit of meeting and removing obstacles and difficulties. On the Saturday preceding the Sunday when the nave was to be opened, it was discovered that a sum of about £80, balance of contract, had to be paid before the key of the church could be obtained. This sum the office-bearers were not prepared to pay upon such an unexpected turn of events, and the Bishop was informed of this, and that the opening could not take place the next morning. What was to be done? His Lordship was not long in answering the question, for he at once set off and went over that scattered district and saw the different members of the congregation, and informed them of the difficulty, and by 4 p.m. he had the whole of the money collected, and the opening service took place as announced.

To continue our story, the Rev. Mr Kingdon resigned the charge in 1859, and the Rev. J. Kinder, M.A., Trinity College, Cambridge, now Dr. Kinder, of Remuera, then Headmaster of the Church Grammar School at Farnell, was after a short interval appointed by Bishop Selwyn to hold divine services in the church on Sunday mornings. In 1863 the population had so far increased as to make it desirable to appoint a resident clergyman to the district, and the Rev. E. H. Heywood succeeded to the charge, which he held for eight years, till his death. In his time the present parsonage was built on the ground at the corner of the Remuera and Brighton roads and subsequently the church was much improved. Upon Mr Heywood's death he was succeeded by the Ven. Archdeacon Pritt, B.A., of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was also given the charge of St. Andrew's at Epsom, and in his time further improvements and extensions to the church were made. The present chancel and transepts were added, and also the beautiful carved screen representing so effectively, as it does, New Zealand and English foliage. In 1884 the present tower was added, and now serves partly as an organ chamber. Subsequently in 1884 a fine organ was obtained for the church from Messrs Henry Jones and Sons, of Brompton, London. It has two manuals and twenty stops, with a full compass of pedals, thirty notes, and a bourdon, a cello, and a 15ft open diapason on the pedals. The services of the choir, organist and choirmaster are honorary. The office of organist and choirmaster have been held by Mr Edwin Heaketh for twenty seven years.

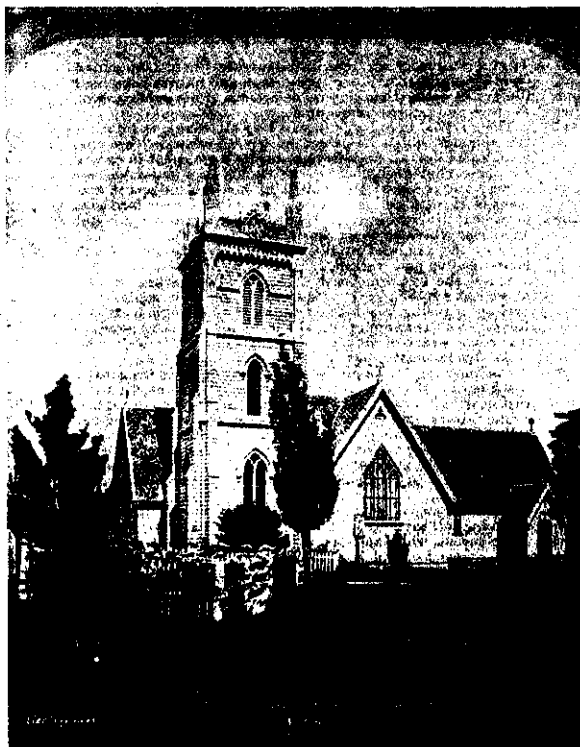
In 1876 stained glass was inserted in the east end window, the subject of the centre light being St. Mark. Subsequently the two side memorial windows in the chancel were added. These three windows are the work of Messrs Luric and Ferguson, of Melbourne, and they were erected by different members of the congregation. In the west end there is another beautiful window by J. B. Capronnier, of Brussels, the subject being 'The Angel Reaper.' This also is a memorial window, and was erected by the sons of a deceased lady member of the congregation. A facsimile of this beautiful window, and by the same



(From a painting by Dr. Kinder.)

ST. MARK'S CHURCH 1846-7.

Thames goldfield notoriety, built the house now owned by Mr C. C. McMillan, who has made large additions to it. In 1881 the Remuera Land Company was formed by Mr Morrin, and land sold as high as £250 per acre. Sir George Arney's land, and also that of Mr James Williamson, was subsequently cut up and sold at high figures. All this contributed very much to the rapid progress of the district, and a good number of handsome houses—Mr Ware's, Mr Mitchellson's, Mr Shera's, Mr Browning's, Mr Jagger's, Mr Parker's, Mr A. Clark's, Mr D. B. Cruickshank's, Mr Westwood's, Mr S. Morrin's (now Mr T. Buddle's), Mr Lennox's, and Mr E. Heaketh's have given a new character to the neighbourhood.



ST. MARK'S CHURCH, 1891.