ELLISFIELD.

Opening of the War Memorial Hall.—Saturday, October 30th, was a red letter day in the history of this village, the occasion being the opening of a new Parish Hall, erected in memory of those from the parish who fell in the great war. A large gathering assembled in the afternoon at three o'clock for the formal opening. After a short and most appropriate prayer by the Rector (the Rev. A. Mackay, M.A.), Major Hoare, who presided, said they had met to perform a solemn ceremony, and to give public expression to thoughts which would be uppermost in the minds of all present, and also to render thanks to those men of the parish who had laid down their lives in order that those who were left behind and their children might live in freedom. It was up to all to see that the unselfish sacrifices that had been made should not be in vain, and that the lessons taught them should not be forgotten. Not the least of these lessons was that they were, each and all, entirely dependent upon others for nearly everything that made their lives possible; and, consequently, their real interest in life was, for the most part, wrapped up in the lives of others, and especially in those who lived in their immediate neighbourhood. Nothing could assist that principle more than a joint interest in some possession. Such a principle was embodied in that hall, which came to them, as it were, as a present from those gallant fellows whose names were inscribed on the memorial tablet, and belonged equally to all in that parish. The hall was built out of funds raised in the parish by a Committee, duly elected from the whole parish at a parish meeting. They had been greatly assisted by Lady Portsmouth, through whose generosity they were owners in perpetuity, not only of the hall, but also of the meadow in which the hall stood. They had also received valuable outside help from Mr. and Mrs. Bauer, Mr. and Mrs. Sutton, and Mr. Way, and he was sure he was voicing the feelings of the whole parish in thanking them for their kindly interest and co-operation. Let there be no mistake in the mind of anyone for whom the hall was intended, and to whom it belonged. Subject to certain rules, which were always necessary when many people were interested in a joint possession—rules which apply to everyone alike—it was for the use and enjoyment equally of everybody in the parish. Of course, he did not mean that anyone who lived outside would be excluded; on the contrary, their neighbours from the surrounding districts would be at all times heartily welcomed. The point was that there was no intention of running the hall either for one faction or another—it was meant for the enjoyment of all. Major Hoare went on to say that there were about 200 people in Ellisfield, so that each should feel that he or she owned one-200th part of the hall and meadow, and cherish it as a valuable possession, care for it, help it along in every possible way, and regard it not simply as the village hall, but as their village hall. The reading room and recreation club, with various games, would be started at once, and would be open every week evening from 6 to 9 during the winter to any inhabitant over 14 years of age. It was hoped also shortly to start a lending library, and, later on, to use the meadow for such games as quoits and bowls. Those present would, he thought, be interested to hear something about the financial position. The hall, with the necessary furniture, would cost about £700. Towards this sum they had collected about £540, so that there remained a balance of £160 to be raised. They must all do their best to wipe off this debt, and by that means show that they still honoured those gallant fellows who had laid down their lives, and value the gift which they had handed down to them (applause). He then asked Mrs. Pigott formally to declare the hall open. Mrs. Pigott remarked that it gave her great pleasure to open the hall—a building which had been much needed. It seemed to her to be a most fitting memorial to those, who, cut off in the midst of their young manhood, ever brought joy and sunshine into their lives. They could now carry on a bond of sympathy with them and fellowship with each other. She was sure that everyone would agree that, to make the hall a success, goodwill must always prevail. If by chance they met goodwill on the road they would always find two friends with him—peace and happiness. Therefore, when they were getting up any function, be sure and send them an invitation, and, if they were present, all would go well. She asked them to remember their names, "Goodwill, peace, happiness," for to many of them those four walls would ever hold a memory very sweet and also very sacred. In this spirit of unity she declared the hall open (applause). Mr. Harry Way then feelingly sang "Crossing the Bar." After votes of thanks to Mrs. Pigott for opening the hall, and to Major Hoare for presiding, the afternoon proceedings closed with the singing of the National Anthem. In the evening an excellent concert was given, the hall being packed. The programme was provided largely by local talent, assisted by a few friends from outside. The vocalists included Mrs. Probert, Miss Gertie Williams, Mrs. Martin Harvey, Mr. A. Stacey, Mr. W. Frankham, Mr. Harry Way, Mr. J. E. Whittingham, Rev. Angus McKay, and Major Hoare, and Miss Clara Hollick contributed pianoforte selections. Another item was presented by the Ellisfield talent, troupe (Mr. R. Probert, Mr. F. Brassington, Mr. W. Frankham, and Mr. E. Frankham). During a short interval, Mr. Martin Harvey proposed a hearty vote of thanks to those who had taken part in making the events of the day such a complete success, and especially mentioned the generous assistance of Miss Clara Hollick (Southampton), also Mr. J. E. Whittingham and Mr. Harry Way (Basingstoke). He also apologised for the absence of Mr. Hoare, who was unable to take his part in the evening programme, in consequence of a cold. The net proceeds of the concert amounted to £9 17s. 6d.