

THIS 36-ROOM HOUSE where Charles Brown (and his father) lived was amongst the largest in early New Plymouth. It was called "The Pines" and was situated on the town side of the Henuli River. Amongst its amenities were two bathrooms, with cold water laid on. Some people described them as "expensive luxuries."

Charles Brown was more than a son of a famous man

(By a Staff Correspondent)

TARANAKI history, as with history everywhere, measures the past by the contributions of individuals. A leader stands out, directs and shapes the life of his community or nation, and plays his part. Generally, that part is acknowledged, but sometimes not as fully as might be, particularly when the individual is shadowed by the stature of his father.

Such a fate has perhaps attended Charles Brown, best known in a 20th century Taranaki as "the son of the man who was the friend of Keats."

Yet Charles Brown earned respect in his own right, in his own time, and played a big share in the building of the New Plymouth settlement of a century and more ago.

He was the only son of Charles Armitage Brown, landed at New Plymouth from the Amelia Thompson (his father followed in the Oriental), was returned to the Legislative Council when 21 years of age and was first superintendent of the Province of New Plymouth. During the war years he played a conspicuous and gallant part, being promoted to Major and winning warm approval for his command of the advanced line of skirmishers at Maohetahi.

Papers made available to the Herald by Mrs. Freda M. Hartley, of North Canterbury, a grand-daughter of Charles Brown, give a picture of the man. They help to show that while the father held a considerable stature in literature, the son was of immediate consequence in the New Plymouth of the 1850s.

An 1844 letter

Something of that busy colonial life is revealed in a private letter Charles Brown wrote to a London friend on April 26, 1844. This was two years after the death of his father.

"I suppose you are much surprised at not having received an official copy of my father's will and a power of attorney from me. I furnished everything that was required of me more than three months ago, including the value of the property my father left, which valued at the utmost came to £3986/15/6, excluding the sum invested and the proceeds of insurance. . . I shall therefore go to Port Nicholson as soon as I have gathered my crop of Indian corn, which will be in about a fortnight hence.

"Since I wrote you last I have sold 190 acres of my rural land for £200, eighty of it in cash and the remainder in four bills at 3-6-8-12 months, with interest at the rate of 10 per cent. The person I have sold it to is considered one of the safest in the place and I have no doubt I could get my bills cashed if I wished it, but I do not think I shall do more than I have before the bills become due.

"I am at present engaged in carving and finishing a spearhead as a pattern to cast for the railings round my father's grave. I have a good deal of the Regina's sheathing, out of which I shall cast them. I shall send you one by the first opportunity, as I pride myself a little on the execution.

"When I return from Port Nicholson, I can get a sketch of a threshing machine. I intend to make one as there will be about 3000 bushels of grain here next harvest and farmers are now paying one penny a bushel for threshing wheat by hand. At half that, it will pay me handsomely for the machine.

"This letter would have been longer could I have written it yesterday, but I was running about after a man who owed me £18 and is going today to Sydney in the Star of China. I have not got the money, but he has left a power of attorney with a person here to receive the balance of the proceeds of a house after a mortgage of £40 on it has been paid, and pay me out of it, which I think there will be money enough to do. . . .

Yours, CHARLES BROWN."

The grave referred to in this letter was completed on Marland Hill, but when the hill was escarped and fortified just before the war began the memorial was covered with earth. It was rediscovered some 70 years later.

Unpublished papers

Charles Brown also inherited from his father many unpublished papers and original letters of Keats, Leigh Hunt, Walter Savage Landor, Lord Houghton and the Dikes. A memoir in the New Zealand Herald of December 15, 1885, written by Mr. C. D. Whitcombe, formerly of Taranaki, refers to these papers:—

"It is to be hoped that he (Charles Brown) may be prevailed upon some day to make them public, and issue from New Zealand a volume of reminiscences of these great literary geniuses of our era. A work of such a character would be of deep interest in itself, and especially interesting to New Zealanders-born."

The father only knew New Zealand for seven months. He died in New Plymouth in June, 1842, in settlement conditions contrasting strangely with the life he knew among the elite of literature and art in London and Florence.

His son survived until 1901 and the age of 61 years. He was 21 when he landed at New Plymouth and 35 when elected captain of the Taranaki Militia. The warrant of his appointment, by Colonel Thomas Gore Browne, is held by Mrs. Hartley.

Captain Charles Brown distinguished himself at the Battle of Waikare, where he commanded the volunteers at Jury's farm, where the wounded were collected. Later, and not so well known, was his intervention to protect the lives of the ship-

wrecked passengers and crew of the Lord Worsley.

Mr. Whitcombe records: "In this case, virtue has been its own reward, for few people even know of the great service thus rendered, and the only acknowledgment ever received



CHARLES BROWN, in later life, when he could look back on a life of service to the New Plymouth settlement.

by Major Brown was a letter conveying the earnest thanks and acknowledgments of Colonel Warre, commanding the Imperial troops in the Taranaki district."

Two classes

Another military picture of Charles Brown lives on in a letter

to Donald McLean, on "Matters Affecting the Colonial Forces at Taranaki." Brown had no soldiering experience before his Taranaki adventures, it might be remembered.

He wrote:—

"I have the honour to make the following recommendations:—

"Classification: That whatever the name of the force comprising the N.C.O.s and private, they be divided into first and second classes, the first for active offensive, the second class for mainly defensive purposes and operations.

"That the first class receive half a crown a day pay, ration allowance, two gills of rum, or where practicable, two pints of beer per diem, and the usual clothing allowance. That any man of either class not drawing the beer or rum for one month should be allowed £1/10/- for it.

"Competition: A proportion, not

exceeding one-third of the first class, should be natives recruited from various tribes and so distributed on duty out of their own districts. The second class might comprise a few natives who could be relied upon to act on the defensive, but not on the offensive, in their own districts.

"To carry out the application of the foregoing suggestions in Taranaki, I recommend that the Bush-rangers and Thames Unit Volunteers be combined into one force of 120 first class and 40 second class, and forty first class natives, making 200 men, who are, enrolled until such time as they shall be lawfully discharged.

"I recommend that the Armed Constabulary be similarly organised. The friendly natives at Taranaki can be relied upon.

"Duty: The first class should do all the duty requiring personal bravery, activity and intelligence and endurance in seeking and following the enemy. In certain cases, failure of duty to involve removal from the first to the second class.

"In all cases where there is not previous service to justify the enrolling of a man in the first class, he should be enrolled in the second class and promoted when the officer commanding is satisfied that he possesses the necessary qualifications. The second class should perform all garrison duties that may be required, in barracks, blockhouses, redoubts or camps not in immediate danger from the enemy.

"Age, etc. The first class should be single and not exceed 50 years of age, and should be thoroughly inspected, so as to exclude all men who have ruptures, contracted chests and various veins, disease of the heart, etc. No beneficial hint as to stature can be laid down.

"The second class might be even 60 years of age without detriment, which would admit of making up the number necessary without family ties. Middle-aged and elderly men, if steady and sober, have their habits more confirmed than younger men, require less sleep, are less impulsive, and therefore make more steady sentries. Their medical inspection need only disqualify them if suffering from disease that might supervene under excitement, or that

happened in New Zealand by ROSS GORE

THE BETSY. THE SAILING SHIP DROVE OFF COOK AND NOBODY KNOWS THE REASON FOR WIND



A BAD WAY CAPT. GOODENOUGH & HIS CREW CONTRACTED SCURVY



ON SEPT. 29 THE SHIP WAS GONE. THE WHOLE CREW DROVE NORTH TO

② SCURVY HAD THEM ALMOST HELPLESS. ON FEB. 13 THE BETSY HAD LEFT A SEALING GANG ON MACQUARIE. IN AUGUST SHE TRIED TO PICK THEM UP BUT SPENT THREE WEEKS BATTLING AGAINST HEAVY SEAS.



FINALLY SHE HAD TO ABANDON THE GANG. THE SEVEN MEN MADE FOR SYDNEY, BUT A SERIES OF N.W. GALES FORCED



THEY COULDN'T DO IT. THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING TO DO. THEY CUT THE JOLLYBOAT, CONTAINING THE FOUR DYING MEN, ADRIFT. THIS LIGHTENED THE WHALE BOAT

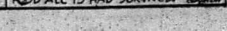
③ CAPT. GOODENOUGH TO SAIL FOR N.Z. BAD WEATHER CONTINUED. THE BETSY SUFFERED SEVERE DAMAGE—TWO RUDDERS WERE LOST. FOOD & WATER



WERE SPERATELY SHORT. THEN SCURVY TOOK HOLD. THE EFFECTS OF SCURVY ARE SIMPLY FRIGHTFUL. IT MANIFESTS ITSELF IN SWOLLEN JOINTS, CONTRACTED SINOWS, EXCRUCIATING



④ FEAR OF BEING KILLED & EATEN. ON FEB. 23, 1816, THEY WERE RESCUED BY THE BRIG ACTIVE. THE TWO WHITE SURVIVORS REACHED SYDNEY BY WAY OF TAHITI ON OCT. 1816. THE GANG LEFT



AT MACQUARIE HAD BEEN PICKED UP IN APRIL, 1816 BY THE ELIZABETH & MARY, 15 MONTHS AFTER BEING LEFT THERE. THOUGH SHORT OF FOOD ALL 13 HAD SURVIVED.

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