E. S. Hannah

Memories of a Mission House

A Series of Interviews with

Miss ALICE MAXWELL

"THE ELMS," Tauranga

by H. BRADNEY WILLIAMS

TAURANGA, 1942

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INTRODUCTION

The following six interviews with Miss Maxwell were undertaken at the request of the National Broadcasting Service in order that as much as possible of the store of facts and incidents in her possession relating to the lives of our missionaries and other early settlers might be made available to listeners throughout the Dominion.

With a view to securing a permanent record of these interesting recollections, the Directors of the Broadcasting Service were good enough to give permission for the publication of the interviews, first in the columns of the "Bay of Plenty Times" and subsequently in this collected form. For this permission I would extend my sincere thanks and would particularly express my gratitude to Mr. Alan Mulgan for the kindly help afforded me throughout the preparation of this series of talks. My indebtedness to Miss Maxwell for placing her wealth of knowledge at my disposal is so obvious as to need no emphasising on my part.

H. Bradney Williams.

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Memories of a Mission House

By ALICE MAXWELL

THERE is no more interesting home in New Zealand than "The Elms," Tauranga. Originally known as "The Mission House," after its humbler predecessors, it later became "The Archdeaconry," in honour of the position held by its builder, the Rev. A. N. Brown, and finally was changed to "The Elms" on the withdrawal of the Church Missionary Society from active work in Tauranga, and the purchase of the house by the Archdeacon's wife, as a private residence.

Alfred Nesbit Brown was posted to Tauranga in 1838 as missionary in charge, and there he spent the remaining 46 years of his life. The Mission House was first occupied by him in 1847 and has the distinction, very rare in this country, of having been in continuous occupation by one family for a full century. The house is beautiful in design, and its appearance, its age, its associations and its contents have made it a place of quite exceptional interest.

"The Elms" has been one of the centres of Bay of Plenty history, and the house and its relics have been most carefully preserved. It is occupied to-day by Miss Alice Maxwell, a niece-in-law of Archdeacon Brown. In this series of talks we present a number of interviews with Miss Maxwell in which she describes some of the contents of the house and shows their connection with the pioneering days.

I. THE EVE OF GATE PA.

The first article selected by Miss Maxwell for description was the table in the dining room, of which she said:—

" This table is undoubtedly by far the most interesting piece of furniture in this house, and I think it is no exaggeration to claim for it the distinction of being the most historically important table to be found anywhere in New Zealand.

" The very cloth which covers it is worthy of attention as a piece of workmanship such as is seldom to be seen in these days. Hand-woven at Home of linen flax, and brought out by the youthful missionary, Alfred Brown, and his bride, to Paihia, in the Bay of Islands, in the year 1829, it has been in constant use throughout the intervening 113 years, for 57 of which it has been under my own care and in regular daily use; yet as you will observe " (and here Miss Maxwell subjected it to a strenuous test of folding and pulling) " it is still strong enough to stand rough treatment, whilst there is not a single blemish in it due to wear or age. The only defect is one hole due to a spark from a wood fire.

" You will notice that at one end the colour is somewhat faded. This is due to the fact that since it has been in my charge I have taken care to see that it is always so laid upon the table that this end only may be exposed to the rays of the sun which come through the french window. I am thankful now to remember how often my dear sister Edith, when she was with me, used to remind me to ' put the right end out.' I think that there are few modern materials which would not merely lose some of their colour but be perished utterly to destruction under such a test in only a fraction of the 113 years which this cloth has endured.

" But now let us look at the table itself, which also accompanied the youthful couple on their bold voyage to this unknown land whose shores they were destined never to leave. You will observe that the table top pivots horizontally on the main frame, thus exposing four thumb screws, each of which when loosened, releases one of the legs which is then free to fold up on a hinge into the frame, thus making, when all the legs are folded and the top is swung back into its original position, a flat package 4ft. 3in. by 2ft. 1½in. by 7in. This

could easily be carried on a man's back—a very important consideration in those days, when, apart from an occasional boat or canoe journey, all transit was by narrow foot tracks through bush or over marsh and mountain, with men as the sole beasts of burden.

" Note, also, that when it is pivoted at right angles to its original position, the top of the table can be unfolded on hinges to twice its original size, giving a table 4ft. 3in. square, each leaf of which is a single piece of solid mahogany. When still further seating was required, an additional semi-circular member, supported on three independent legs, was added at each end, where it was firmly secured in position by wooden dowel pins and brass catches, thus constituting an oval 8ft. 6in. long by 4ft. 3in wide, as large a table as could comfortably be accommodated between the fireplace and the french window. In fact there is no doubt that when the house was designed, the size of the dining room was dictated by the dimensions of this central feature of its furnishing.

"It is in this oval form, and covered with spotless linen and shining silver and gleaming glass, that I want you to picture this table on the occasion which I am about to describe to you. It was nearly eighty years ago on the evening of April 28, 1864. During all that day and the one preceding it, the military and naval forces newly arrived from Auckland had been busy disembarking and moving into place the artillery requisite for the reduction of the fortifications erected by the rebel natives at Gate Pa, and making all the other preparations necessary for the assault on that position, which had been fixed for the following day, April 29. In addition to the troops newly arrived, there was a smaller force under Colonel Carey which had been encamped for some months just outside the Archdeaconry gates on that part of the town still called " The Camp." The officers of this body and several of those from the warships which had paid previous visits to the port, were by this time personal friends of the Archdeacon and Mrs. Brown, and had already enjoyed the kindly hospitality so often and so freely extended to them all, from Governors and Bishops to mere passing wayfarers.

" As many, both of these old friends and of the newcomers, as could be spared from active duty were gathered for supper in this room on that momentous evening, filling it to capacity, in fact beyond, as only a few months ago I had a visitor who told me that his father had been amongst those

present on that occasion, and had often related to him how he had been unable to be accommodated at the main table but sat at a side buffet.

" Underlying the enjoyment of that happy meeting of comrades on the eve of an important task, and emphasised by the sound of cannon fire from Gate Pa, where a preliminary bombardment to cover the final disposition of our troops, had already commenced, there must surely have been some thoughts as to how many of those present were fated to meet after the morrow's work was completed, but, fortunately, to none could it have been given to foresee that of all those guests, the Army Surgeon (Dr. Manley) alone would survive to enter that house again.

" At the close of the meal all those present participated in Holy Communion, celebrated by the Archdeacon, who gave an eloquent and impressive address, after which the hymn ' Abide With Me ' was sung, accompanied by Mrs. Brown on the old piano still treasured in the library. Then the guests departed in preparation for their varying duties fixed to commence at dawn, and all unconscious that they were saying ' farewell ' for the last time.

" The next day the battle raged, and on the following morning the house, so recently the scene of feasting, was filled with wounded men for whom, on account of the totally unexpected number of casualties, the accommodation prepared at the military hospital, proved hopelessly inadequate. So heavy, too, was the demand for coffins that it was not until the fourth day that the Archdeacon could be called upon to face the sad task of burying in the mission cemetery not only his so-recent guests, but forty others who had shared their fate. I still have a contemporary picture depicting the tents and awnings which had to be pitched in the cemetery to shelter the bodies whilst the coffins were being made and the graves dug.

" These facts (together with many other items of interest) were received by me direct from my uncle, Archdeacon Brown, when I paid him a lengthy visit in the year 1881. Being then a young girl, I absorbed with avidity all that he recounted to me of his early life and adventures, and they have remained firm in my memory ever since. To most people of those days, however, these reminiscences were merely old stories, not yet raised to the dignity of history and so it came to pass that my sister Edith and I became almost the sole repositories of the

more intimate details of the past of this historic mission station, and I feel that it is my duty to place these on record whilst opportunity still serves, so that as full a memorial as possible may remain of those brave pioneers from whom descend so many of the gallant men who to-day are striving strenuously on widely scattered battlefields to uphold the standard of liberty and freedom of thought now threatened by forces undreamt of by their forbears."

II. MEMENTOES

After completing the story of the table, Miss Maxwell drew my attention to a miniature in an ebony and silver frame, standing on the mantelpiece. It was a portrait of her uncle, Archdeacon Brown; and a truly remarkable piece of work both for its craftsmanship and as a speakingly characteristic likeness of the originial as I could confirm for myself from photographs in Miss Maxwell's possession. This miniature was painted in Delhi by Indian artists who specialised in this class of work. All they had to guide them was a photograph given to them for the purpose by Bishop Stuart. Also from Delhi came the very beautiful chess board of papier mache and paua shell on which the Archdeacon was in the habit of practising his favourite recreation, of which he was no mean exponent.

Adorning the walls of the room were large photographs of Miss Maxwell's father and mother who came out to Australia from England in 1853, very shortly after their marriage, in response to a call for Presbyterian ministers to serve the rapidly growing populaton. On arrival, the young couple proceeded to Armidale where the Rocky River gold diggings had recently been opened. After ministering to the miners for some time, Mr Maxwell was called to take charge of the Presbyterian Church at Kilmore in Victoria, but twelve years of strenuous work and trying climate proved too much for him. On his death in 1865, Mrs. Maxwell decided to bring her young family to New Zealand where her brother held the post of Judge of the Supreme Court, having been sent out from England to fill that high position.

It is to this transference from Australia to New Zealand 77 years ago that Miss Maxwell owes her relationship with the late Archdeacon Brown, and her ownership of "The Elms." In 1855 Brown lost his wife, who had come out

to New Zealand with him in 1829, and who had shared in all the trials and hardships of the pioneer days. After five years of widowhood he married Miss Christina Johnston, sister of Mrs. Maxwell, whose daughters, Miss Edith and Miss Alice Maxwell, thus became nieces-in-law to the Archdeacon. On his death in 1884, "The Elms" naturally passed to his widow and later, by her instructions, to her surviving sister (Mrs. Maxwell) for life, with remainder to the two nieces. Of all these persons, Miss Alice Maxwell now remains the sole survivor.

Further striking features of the room were a very beautiful oil painting of Miss Maxwell's maternal grandfather, Alexander James Johnston, an Aberdeen banker; also an exceptionally fine tapestry landscape panel worked by Miss Maxwell's mother.

Next to catch my eye was a full concert grand piano by Broadwood, of which Miss Maxwell gave me the following history :—"My mother was an unusually fine pianist, and it was only natural, therefore, that as soon as conditions in the land of their adoption were sufficiently settled, her husband should have sent Home for the very best instrument he could find, for the exercise of her talents, and equally that it should have accompanied the bereaved widow on her removal to Wellington. On her deciding to acquire as a residence, the only house at that time existing in what is now the closely populated suburb of Wadestown, the question arose of how, in the absence of any road or even a clearly defined track, such a bulky and heavy piece of furniture was to be conveyed to the new home. With the true pioneer spirit of refusal to be daunted by difficulties, my mother engaged a bullock wagon, and loading upon it the piano and her other furniture, proceeded herself to pilot the team up the steep and rugged hillside, and for many years the track so formed served as the only channel of communication between the isolated house and the infant city. With the growth of population in Wellington, more settlers came to the Wadestown district, and our house became a sort of centre for community life, the first religious services of the neighbourhood being held in my mother's drawing room and the first Sunday School being organised by my sister Edith, the hymns being accompanied on the piano, to accommodate which it had been necessary to enlarge the room. When we moved to Tauranga, the piano, of course, came with us."

It was of interest to learn from Miss Maxwell that in those early days the only passenger vehicle in Wellington was a one-horse cab, one of whose regular tasks, whenever the Judge was in Wellington, was to take her uncle from his residence in Tinakori Road to his chambers at the Courthouse.

A curious link with Achdeacon Brown is a wooden stool specially made for his use in the pulpit of the chapel which formerly stood in the mission grounds. Miss Maxwell explained that its exceptional height was designed to compensate for her uncle's diminutive stature and enable him to remain visible to his congregation when seated in his pulpit.

Passing into the drawing room, my attention was caught by a fine bowl of Waterford crystal which must be at least 100 years old as it is that time since a change in Irish fiscal arrangements killed the glass industry in that city. But if age is to be the criterion, all must give place to an exquisite Indian silk shawl of almost transparent fineness of texture, and literally crumbling under the burden of the 300 years which have elapsed since its maker put the last stitch to its embroidery.

Among the many pictures which adorn the walls of this room and the hall are several charming water colour sketches of Tauranga in the days when its history was in the making, especially noticeable being one, depicting the Monmouth Redoubt in its original state with the old barracks to which, when things were at their blackest, the women and children of the settlement had to be removed one night from the Mission House where they had already gathered together in anticipation of an attack by the Maoris, and whence they were taken by boat to Auckland, the township being adjudged unsafe for them until the engagements at Gate Pa and Te Ranga brought peace and security. The buildings, after serving for many years as armed constabulary barracks and gaol, were demolished, and the redoubt, laid out in lawns and shrubs, slumbered for many years as an obsolete reminder of far-off days of strife and peril, and a veritable token of present peace, until last year it awoke to find its trenches once more in use as refuge places from a foe to whom the decencies and chivalry which characterised the conduct of the Maoris at Gate Pa are unknown and inconceivable.

Another sketch, painted by an officer staying in the house, and presented by him to Mrs. Brown in 1864, depicts the harbour at the time of the Gate Pa fight, with both British

warships and native war canoes lying off the beach. A striking study of a horse's head also has an interesting story attached to it which Miss Maxwell was good enough to tell me in the following words:—

"Some few years ago I went, in response to a knock, to the front door which was open, and found standing there a stranger who behaved in the most extraordinary manner, taking no notice of me but staring fixedly into the hall until such time as my advance threatened to obstruct his view, when he bounded past me towards this picture, stretching out his hand as though to grasp the bridle and at the same time exclaiming, 'What a glorious painting of Lord Robert's charger. How often I've held those reins while Lord Roberts has mounted him!' Later in response to my inquiries, he revealed himself as the great soldier's ex-groom. It was, I think a great compliment to the artist that coming across this picture completely unexpectedly, this man should so unhesitatingly have recognised it as a portrait of his old charge."

Hanging close to this picture is a beautiful wakahuia and a group of poi balls. The wakahuia is a box specially used by Maori chiefs for the custody of the huia feathers betokening their rank. This specimen is of great antiquity and beauty, and must have been presented to the Archdeacon in the very early days by one of the great chiefs with whom he was in such close and constant touch. One of the poi balls is of special interest as it is interwoven with raw dog-hide, a practice which was only customary in the earliest times, so that specimens are now very rare, most even of the largest museums being without them.

Passing next to the principal bedroom, my attention was at once caught by the magnificent four-poster canopy bed, of which Miss Maxwell told me how, shortly after arrival in Australia, her mother had been invited to select a cedar tree standing in the bush, and how from this tree has been made not only this bed but also the chest of drawers standing in the same room and a table now in the library. In spite of its ninety years' continuous use the bed is still in perfect condition, only the hangings having been renewed.

Another fine piece of furniture in this room is an Indian teak escritoire which was already old when brought out by Mr. and Mrs. Brown in 1829.

And then came a box containing a collection of needlework, the handicraft of Miss Maxwell's mother and grand-

mother, from which she selected for special examination a tucked shirtfront of almost incredibly microscopic stitchery, executed by her mother at the age of eight. It is indeed a marvel of evolution that in little over a century women should have passed from such domesticity to the mastery of internal combustion engines and the spanning-by-flight of oceans.

All of these are but a few of the items which caught my attention during an all too brief inspection of this unique treasure house. Time fails me to tell of the china and trinkets which fill every corner of the rooms, and nearly all of which have their individual stories. About all of them is the indescribable touch of home association, due to everything having been in continuous use under the actual conditions of family life for close upon a century. It is indeed devoutly to be hoped that such conditions may long endure, and ward off the evil day when the cold hand of official custodianship will replace the loving personal care so long bestowed upon these priceless treasures, and the warm atmosphere of home be replaced by the chill air of a museum.

III. THE GREENSTONE EARDROP

On her return to the dining room after showing me round the house, Miss Maxwell produced from a box containing a number of trinkets, a particularly fine greenstone eardrop, and related to me the following instance of Maori gratitude:—

"One summer, many years ago now, my mother and I were spending a holiday at Brent's Boarding House in Rotorua. In those days there were no separate tables in the dining room, such as are usual now, but all sat at one long table, with the proprietor at the head. Mother and I sat next to him. I must also mention that written menus were still unknown in such establishments, and that it was the custom for the waitress to stand at the end of the table and read out the bill of fare, the guests then indicating their choice.

"Just behind the proprietor was a door which gave access to an open passage across which was a corresponding door leading into a room which was reserved for the Rev. F. Spencer, the Missionary, for use on his frequent visits to Rotorua, which was his headquarters.

"One glorious evening the guests were sitting chattily over the last stages of their meal, when there was an alarm

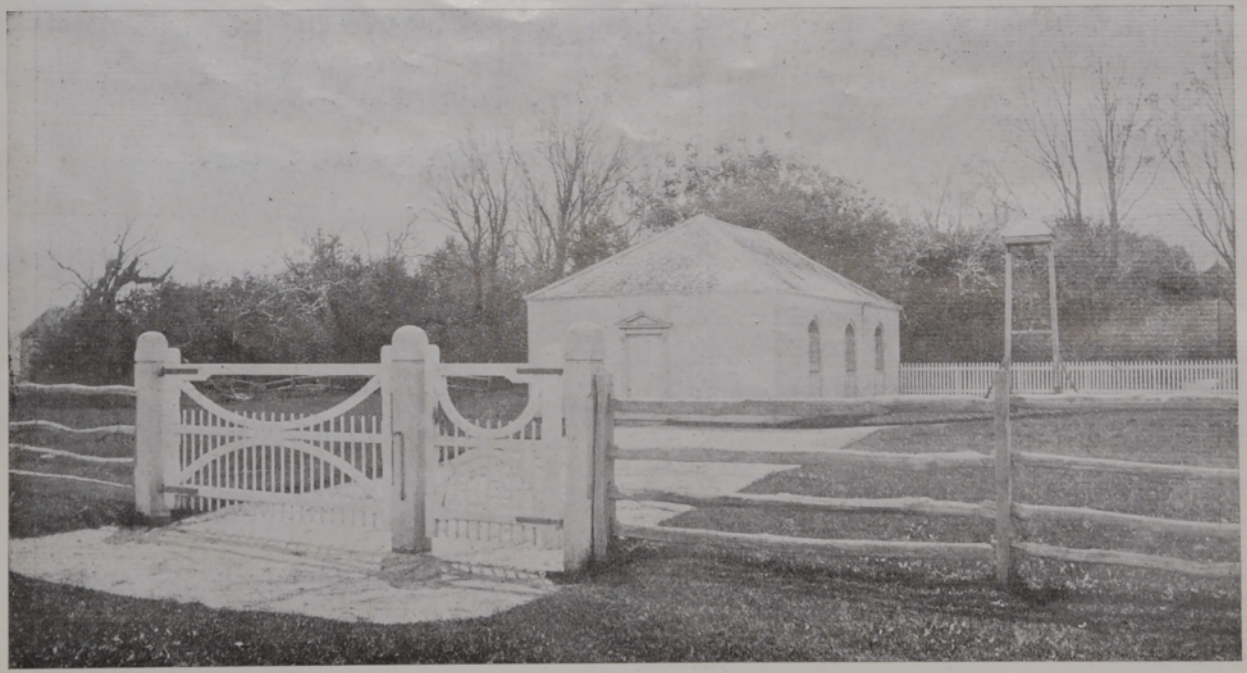
of fire. The trouble proved to be at the Sanatorium, which was well alight. Mother and I followed the others to the scene and watched the quickly-spreading flames. Suddenly there came a momentary lull in the crackling roar of the fire, and during it we heard a most extraordinarily weird cry. We listened carefully in an endeavour to detect whence it came, and after a while we succeeded in tracing it to a young Maori who was lying helpless by the path-side. He had met with an accident in the bush some weeks earlier and had been brought in to the Sanatorium with an injured back and a broken leg. The sound we had heard was his wailing cry—' It's broken again; it's broken again !' and on our approaching we found him prostrate, with his crutches out of reach.

"We already knew of his case and that only the previous day he had been allowed to try his crutches for the first time. When the alarm came he, being regarded as a walking case, had naturally been left to make his own way out while the nurses and attendants saved the more helpless cases. In the excitement and confusion his mastery of his crutches had proved inadequate and he had fallen, refracturing his leg.

" I went back to Brent's and secured pillows and blankets to make the poor fellow comfortable, and stayed with him until well towards midnight, by which time the Sanatorium buildings were merely a heap of smoking ruins, and it was possible to secure helpers to move him. In the meantime I had succeeded in getting in touch with Mr. Spencer and had explained the position to him. He at once gave permission to move the sufferer into his vacant room, which was accordingly done.

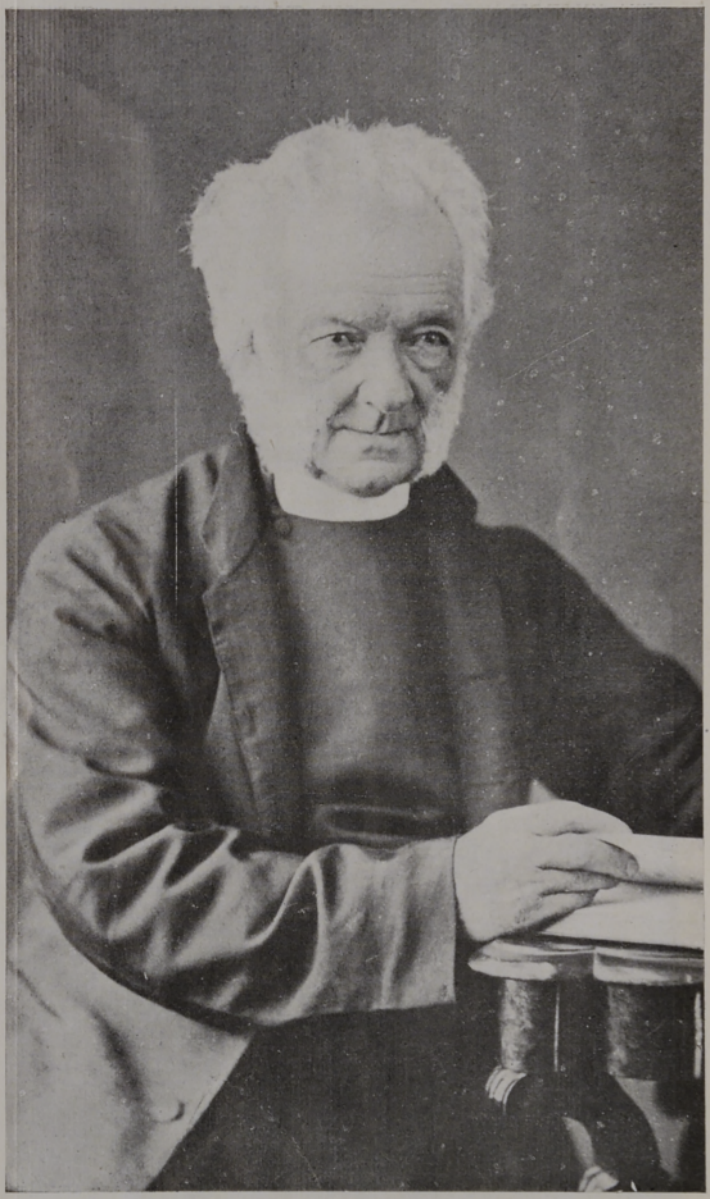
" The following day at dinner, when the maid read out the list of puddings, my mother said in a clear voice, ' Plum pudding please, and a large helping.' Not unnaturally, on hearing such an unusual request, every eye was turned on her, but mother did not mind a scrap. She just sat with her plate before her until everyone was engaged with their own pudding, and then rising calmly from her place took the plate through the door I have already mentioned, across the passage and into the room where the crippled Maori was lying. Here she remained chatting and reading to him for some time. This she did every day for the remainder of our stay in Rotorua, but there was no need for her to repeat her request for a large helping as everyone knew where the pudding was going.

Miss Alice Maxwell



The old Chapel, Belfry and Entrance Gates at the Mission Station. The Belfry and Gates still survive.

The Archdeaconry, now "The Elms". First occupied October, 1847.



Archdeacon Brown

" One day when she went into the room she found a Maori woman squatting in a corner. The woman appeared to take no notice of anything which went on, but sat crooning away to herself.

" In due course our holiday came to an end and we returned home. About a year later, when the incident had quite passed from my conscious memory, I was away down in one of the paddocks by what is now Brown Street, when I noticed a Maori woman passing up and down the hawthorn hedge which at that time marked the boundary, and peering through the gaps she could find, evidently trying to discover a way in. I went across and spoke to her, inquiring what she wanted, but she refused to give me any idea of her mission except to say that she wanted to see Mrs. Maxwell. I directed her to the entrance gate and then brought her up to the house. Mother was sitting, as usual, in the corner of this room furthest from the door. I brought the woman, who was a fine looking specimen—a real rangitira—into the room. When she reached the middle she made a curtsey which could not have been more dignified and graceful if it had been to Royalty itself. Raising herself slowly from the ground, she began fumbling in her skirts one after the other, for in those days many of those garments were worn. After what seemed an endless search, she finally produced a little package from under her waistband. This she proceeded to unroll until she came to this beautiful greenstone eardrop. Going forward to my mother she presented it to her, saying, ' I did go way back inland to my own people to get this for you, and I did walk the whole way from Rotorua on foot to give you this, because you were so good to my son.'

" I did all in my power to persuade that woman to stay the night or even for a meal or a cup of tea, but she refused quite firmly, saying ' No thank you. I have done what I wished. Good-bye. I go away home.'

" I have never heard nor do I expect to hear a more wonderful and graceful example of Maori gratitude.. There had not been one word of communication between my mother and that woman from the day she saw her in her son's room in Rotorua to the time she placed the greenstone eardrop in my mother's hand in this room, nor did we ever hear from her again. Having made her gesture of thanks, she dropped as completely out of our world as though she had never entered it.

"The story was, however, destined to have a most interesting sequel. Some years later Bishop Stuart, who had resigned his Bishopric of Waiapu to take up work in Persia as a simple missionary, called on us in a farewell visit. In the course of conversation, he remarked, 'I have such an interesting thing to tell you. Two days before I left Rotorua I had a double wedding. One couple came with the man carrying the woman he was going to marry, on his back, and with the other couple the woman was carrying the man, and that man, Mrs. Maxwell, was your protege.' Evidently, therefore, the bone had failed to re-knit satisfactorily, and the man was destined to be a cripple for life."

IV. THE BUILDING OF THE MISSION HOUSE

After seeing so many interesting things and hearing so much about past doings at the Mission Station, it was only natural that I should ask Miss Maxwell to tell me something about the building of this historic house. This is what she told me.

"In 1829, when my uncle Brown landed in New Zealand as a young man, no attempt had been made to Christianise the natives anywhere south of Auckland. The efforts of the very few missionaries available were concentrated in the Bay of Islands district where the pioneer missionary Marsden, had made his first landing. Mission headquarters under the guidance of the two William brothers (Henry and William) had for some time been established at Paihia, opposite the port of Kororareka, later known as Russell, and the centre of the then flourishing whaling industry. It was here that uncle landed to begin his practical training (he was already a fully ordained clergyman) in the by no means simple busines of leading the warlike and cannibalistic Maoris into the ways of Christianity and peace. It was whilst undergoing this novitiate, that he laid the foundations of his lifelong friendship with William Williams, later to become first Bishop of Waiapu.

"Although there was always a strong desire on the part of the missionaries to extend their influence southwards, and many tentative voyages were made with that object in view, it was not until early in 1834 that a start was made with a station at Puriri at the mouth of the Thames Valley. In July

of the same year it was decided to extend this branch of the mission work, and Mr. Brown (by this time one of the most fully equipped and experienced of the mission band) was commissioned in conjunction with his friend William Williams, to journey southwards from Puriri and select suitable sites for the foundation of mission stations. As a token of what was to follow, simple rush huts which would serve to give shelter to the missionaries as they passed to and fro among the various and oft-times warring tribes, were to be erected on each site chosen.

" After fixing on Matamata as a suitable position for one station, the investigators pursued their way over the range to Tauranga (or more strictly speaking, to Otumoetai, which was then the dominant settlement), Tauranga, or Te Papa as the natives then termed it, never having been re-occupied since a raid some years earlier in which all except 25 of its inhabitants had been either killed or taken prisoners. The inclusion of this settlement on the selectors' list was undoubtedly due to the advice of Henry Williams, who was already acquainted with it as the result of voyages he had made by boat up and down the East Coast, and who, as an ex-lieutenant in the Royal Navy, would appreciate its advantages as offering a line of retreat to Paihia by boat if at any time troubles with the natives became too pressing.

"Brown and Williams, reached Otumoetai on Saturday, September 6, 1834, and on the following day held services which were well attended. The attitude of the chiefs, however, was indifferent even to the verge of hostility. The leading chief was very emphatic in his advice that they would do better to make their station at Te Tumu, an isolated pa situated on the open beach twenty miles southward, and from whose chief they had recevied a cordial invitation to establish themselves there. A few days spent in surveying the surrounding country convinced the selectors that Te Papa was the proper choice, and on September 10 they staked out sites for two raupo huts and gave instructions to the Maoris for their construction. This may be regarded as the first step towards the erection of the Mission House, although these actual huts were destined to be short lived as the intention to occupy the station immediately was abandoned, and Brown was placed in charge of Matamata instead of Tauranga. One of the huts was bodily removed to Maungatapu to form a residence for a European settler, Peter Dillon, and my uncle has frequently

related to me how, on reaching Tauranga after one of his missionary journeys towards the end of 1835, he was horrified to find the remaining hut in flames, and a cannibal feast in full swing on what is now the lawn overlooking the harbour.

"Although no actual entries can be traced relating to the subject, it is quite clear that these huts must have been replaced by others, as we find numerous statements relating to missionaries either staying at or passing through Tauranga, particularly when on their way to or from Rotorua, where a station had been established. Records also exist of Brown, Wilson, Chapman, Stack and others residing at Tauranga without their families, for whom it was not considered safe, at intervals throughout 1836 and 1837.

"With the beginning of 1838, however, this period of uncertainty terminated, and Brown arrived accompanied by his wife and family, to take charge of what was thenceforth to be one of the most important mission stations in New Zealand.

"No time was lost in commencing the erection of the necessary living accommodation, which took the form of a rush hut, the site of which is marked by a small cairn on the lawn, and which may be regarded as the direct ancestor of the house in which we are now sitting. This hut was taken into occupation by the middle of March, 1838, although by no means complete, as it is noted in my uncle's dairy of the same date that preparations were being made for building a chimney, whilst on June 14 comes the entry "Boarding the ceiling of our front room." From other entries we learn that chimney building entailed the preparation of lime by burning shells specially brought over for the purpose in canoes from the Mount.

"The same year (1838) saw the erection of a store, urgently required for the protection of the multifarious goods belonging to the society. Subsequent years were marked by much building activity, including the commencement of work upon this house. It must be borne in mind that building in those days was no matter of just ordering the timber, cutting it to the required lengths and assembling it. One of the drawbacks of Te Papa as a site for a mission station was the absence of timber within easy reach, and this now made itself all too obvious. Every bit of wood required for building operations had to be brought from Mercury Bay or the Thames. After being felled in the forests there, it had to be

floated round the coast in rafts which were grounded at high water on the Waikareao beach. From there the heavy kauri trunks had, in the absence in the earliest days of either horses or oxen, to be dragged up the steep slope leading to the house site by man power. On what is now the lawn there were two saw pits, and on these the great trunks had to be reduced by hand sawing to the required sections. Nor was the erection of this house the only call upon the time and energy of the workmen. In addition to the numerous minor tasks inevitable in the establishment of a settlement, we know that work was proceeding simultaneously on the library (completed in 1844) and the chapel (1845), and we can be sure that my uncle would have seen that precedence was given to those rather than to his personal accommodation. It is not astonishing therefore, that the house was still far from completion when in mid-December, 1845, fire (caused by a workman's carelessness) completely destroyed the carpenter's workshop, in which were stored all the doors, windows, shutters and other joinery work awaiting installation in the framework of the house, together with all the carpenter's tools and all the stocks of seasoned timber. What this meant in delay can only be realised when we recall that all new timber would have to be seasoned again, and that a round journey Home and back to secure new tools and supplies would take anything from a year to eighteen months. It is probably from this period that the letter dates in which my uncle requested from another station, the loan of three nails to permit the completion of an urgent job.

With the perseverance characteristic of all these pioneers, a fresh start was made, and 1847 saw the completion of the house. I have had visitors here who, noting the high grade of workmanship, have said, 'Of course the house was built at Home in sections and just re-erected here.' This is absolutely incorrect. Every scrap of woodwork and joinery in this house, including the staircase (the first of its kind to be built in New Zealand) and all the Venetian blind shutters, were built on the spot, and the timber in them is as sound and hard now as on the day, 95 years ago, when my uncle and his family entered into possession.

"Not only was all this work carried out in the workshops here, but in later years much outside work was undertaken for other districts. As one example I may instance the doors and windows of St. John's Church, of Te Awamutu, which were all made here and carried the 100 miles or so over the hills and through the bush, on the backs of natives."

V. THE LIBRARY

This room is quite detached from the main house, and was one of the earliest buildings to be erected on the station, being completed in 1844, thus ante-dating the Mission House itself by three years. In fact during the building of the house, the library was partly utilised for living room to eke out the somewhat scanty space available in the raupo whare.

Below its floor exists a large excavation about six feet deep, approached through a trapdoor. This and the space between the ceiling and the roof were used in the early days to hide the missionaries' more valuable belongings from the possible attentions of marauding natives. Fortunately the oft-threatened raids never materialised, and so the efficacy of the precautions was never put to the test. Miss Maxwell explained that this room remains to-day in practically the same state as when in daily use by Archdeacon Brown. Towards the centre is the mahogany table brought out by him in 1829. This was also used by New Zealand's first Bishop (Selwyn) on the occasions of his frequent visits to Tauranga. His portrait and that of his wife still look down from the walls and on the table stand the bronze inkstand and the candlestick and box for sealing wax, which were his property until left as a keepsake on his departure for England. On this inkstand lies a quill pen such as was generally used in those days, steel nibs being still in their infancy.

In addition to Selwyn's portrait, those of Brown's co-workers, Bishop William Williams and Archdeacon Henry Williams and of Judge Martin, first Chief Justice of New Zealand, still grace the room where these men so often met to discuss with Brown the future of the country of their adoption.

Other relics are two pairs of candle snuffers and trays, and Brown's pocket compass which guided him on his numerous journeys through the remoter portions of his extensive archdeaconry, in those days when roads were unknown and even tracks were few and faint. His Bible, too, used by him up to the last for family prayers, his ebony ruler, his porfolio and blotter, and his inkstand also find a place on the tables as memorials of his labours. The mahogany chairs around the room merit attention as being the first set complete with carver's chair ever to be imported to this country, having come out with the Browns' other furniture in 1829.

Against the east wall stands a most interesting relic in the form of the first piano to be brought to New Zealand, and one of the earliest models to be made in England. Its general exterior resemblance to its ancestor, the harpsichord, leads many people to so name it on first inspection. Apart, however, from its constructional difference, its maker's label clearly declared it to be the product of "William Allen, Patentee and Manufacturer of Pianofortes, of Katherine Street, Strand, London," and research has shown that William Allen, after serving for some years with the pioneer firm of Broadwood, set up in business for himself in the very early years of the nineteenth century. When Miss Maxwell and her mother and sister came to reside at the Mission House in 1886, the instrument had fallen sadly into disrepair, with strings all broken, and no note of music available. In fact it had been relegated to the lowly status of a sideboard in the dining room. About ten years ago, however, Miss Maxwell decided to have it repaired, and sent it to an Auckland firm for that purpose. The workman entrusted with the task made an excellent job of it, and to-day its pleasant tone, faint of course in comparison with modern instruments, can often be heard as some visitor tests it.

An even greater musical curiosity, quite unknown even by name to many visitors, is an Aeolian harp, an instrument designed to be inserted in an opening in a window or suspended in a tree, and to be operated by the breezes passing across its strings. The fact that this specimen was made by so well-known a firm as Keith Prowse and Co., of London, is proof of the popularity of the device at one time, but with the decline of Victorian ultra-sentimentalism, its somewhat monotonous strains went completely out of favour, until it is now barely a memory. On no less than three occasions Miss Maxwell has had the harp restrung, but the sea air of Tauranga does not seem to agree with it, and it now stands unvocal, a mere relic of its former self.

But in telling of these externals, I must not omit the heart of the library—the books. Here in their original presses stand row after row of volumes, some, of course, worn with the repeated handling of daily usage by all and sundry, but many of them, evidently reserved by the owner for his own use, in absolutely "mint" condition. The first impression gained from the inspection of these shelves is the enormous love Brown must have had for books as such, even

apart from their literary value. It is indeed a joy to run one's eye along these serried volumes in hand-tooled calf or Persian leather, but it does come as somewhat of a shock to select a volume in full leather binding and find its contents to consist of Murray Lindley's English Grammar or a handbook on gardening. Such instances were, however, the mere occasional exuberances of a bibliophile, for the vast majority of the books are worthy of their dress and, though not in some cases of overwhelming interest to the layman, were fit tools for one coming out to the ends of the earth and yet intending to keep himself abreast of contemporary thought.

A Pictorial Bible edited by Dr. Kitto, dated 1848, bound in full leather, is an interesing specimen of a type of publication in great favour about that time, and a five-volume Life of Wilberforce in full Persian goat is a triumph of workmanship both as to binding and print. Great historic interest attaches to a copy of the Gospel of St. Luke in Maori, printed on the mission press at Paihia in 1835. This was the first portion of Scripture in that language ever printed in New Zealand. Local association also attaches to a copy of Part 5 of Selwyn's " Journey Through New Zealand " autographed by the author to Brown. Among first editions may be noted Paley's " Natural Theology " dated 1802, being the last work published by the author of the once celebrated " Evidences of Christianity."

A small but exquisite volume is an Italian Rosary of 1585, decorated on every page and with numerous illustrations To 1645 belongs a massive volume of "Annotations upon all the books of the Old and New Testaments " whilst 1697 is represented by a first edition of Dr. Isaac Barrow's " Brief Exposition on the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Ten Commandments." The eighteenth century provides two works with the exhaustive title pages so typical of those leisurely days. " The Practice of Piety, Containing the Necessary Duties of a Christian life or the Means of Acquiring Every Virtue, the Remedies against Every Vice and Direction How to Resist all Temptations, Adapted to the Genius of the Present Age " bears the date of 1749, whilst to 1779 belongs "Satan's Invisible World Discovered; or a Choice Collection of Modern Relations proving evidently against the Atheists of this present Age, that there are Devils, Spirits, Witches and Apparitions, from Authentic Records, Attestations of Witnesses of undoubted Veracity. To which is added, That marvellous History of

Major Weir and his Sister, the Witches of Bargarran, Pittenweem and Calder, etc. By Mr. George Sinclair, late Professor of Philosophy in the College of Glasgow." The title page goes on to inform us that the book was printed in Edinburgh by Alexander Robertson and was for sale " at his shop, middle of Niddery's-wynd." The work is indeed an astounding revelation of the credulity rampant in those days amongst those who should have been the leaders of thought.

In addition to the books, are drawers full of early newspapers, including Nos. 15, 25 and 27 of " The New Zealand Advertiser and Bay of Islands Gazette " published weekly during 1840 in Russell, then the seat of Government for New Zealand. One of these numbers contains as a Government advertisement, full sailing directions for entering the harbour of Auckland which had just been adopted as an official port. Another rarity is No. 1 of " The New Zealander," dated Saturday, June 7, 1845, and giving detailed accounts of the burning of the township of Russell by Heke and his followers.

Doubtless further search would have revealed more interesting material, but time forbade, as there was still much which Miss Maxwell had to tell and show me, elsewhere.

VI. THE BELL

After inspecting the library, we proceeded to the old chapel ground where Miss Maxwell told me the following history of the mission bell.

" The sound of bells had great attraction for the Maoris in the early missionary days but at first their knowledge was limited to small hand bells and in many cases to ingenious substitutes such as suspended axe heads.

" As early as 1835, when my uncle Brown received his first independent charge, that of establishing a mission station at Matamata, he determined that if it could possibly be managed, his converts should be the first in New Zealand to enjoy the sound of a real church bell. He therefore placed an order in London for one, and in due course this was shipped. Its arrival in Auckland created quite a sensation, not untinged with envy, and as uncle, owing to pressure of mission work in the Waikato, was unable to be present to receive it, a group of Aucklanders boarded the vessel with the intention of inducing the captain to hand it over to them, hoping thus to

secure for their township the privilege of possessing the first bell. Fortunately the captain knew his duty too well to yield to their blandishments, and stoutly refused to hand the bell over to anyone other than the consignee or his properly authorised agent and as there were in those days no harbour sheds in which goods could be stored for later delivery, he kept the bell on board and carried it back to London. I feel very grateful to that captain, for had he had a less keen sense of duty I might never have had the bell.

" When it came back on the following outward journey of the vessel, uncle was there to receive it and bring it on to Tauranga, to the charge of which station he had by that time been transferred. It was hung in the same wooden belfry, on the same spot which it now occupies; alongside the raupo chapel then in use. This temporary building was replaced by a wooden chapel in 1845, and this in turn has vanished, leaving the bell and belfry as sole survivors on what used to be the chapel grounds. The foundations of the old chapel are still distinctly traceable on the lawn.

" For some 35 years the bell was used for all the mission services, and in time of peril its voice was heard in warning. By 1875, with the erection of the parish church, regular public services at the chapel were discontinued and the bell's days of usefulness seemed over.

" When on the death of my aunt (Archdeacon Brown's widow) my mother and sister and I came to reside here, mother finding the bell fulfilling no useful purpose, lent it to the Presbyterian Church which she attended. After some years an accident occurred which resulted in the bell being so badly damaged as to be absolutely useless. Mother therefore had it returned and rehung in its old belfry, which by this time was in a tottering condition with the uprights rotted at the ground level, and only preserved from collapse by being shored up with long props. There the bell hung, silent and useless, for over 30 years, in the course of which my sister and I were repeatedly assured that it was impossible to get it repaired in New Zealand. Early in 1929, however, we heard of an Auckland firm which would undertake the task of re-casting, and we lost no time in getting the bell taken down. As soon as the men touched it, it came apart in their hands in three sections. These were despatched to Auckland with instructions to recast it in all respects as it had been, with all the old markings and dates on it. Whilst it was away we

had the belfry thoroughly repaired and bolted to a concrete foundation to prevent further rotting. It was with great joy that we received the bell back in perfect condition and possessing a sweetness of tone beyond anything we had ventured to hope for; a most successful issue to the first re-casting of a bell in this country.

" This year of 1929 being the centennary of the arrival of our uncle in New Zealand, my dear sister Edith felt that there could be no more fitting celebration of that event than the reinstatement of the bell in its old home. The work was pushed on with accordingly, and on Friday, November 29, the hundredth anniversary of uncle's first setting foot on New Zealand soil at Paihia, the bell was re-dedicated at a small private service conducted by the Rev. A. F. Hall, at that time Vicar of the parish, assisted by three Maori clergymen. My brother Max tolled the bell 100 times.

" On the following Sunday a public commemorative service was held at which the bell was again tolled, and a similar service has been held every year since, on the Sunday nearest to November 29. On every occasion the Vicar has had with him as assistants, members of the native clergy—a truly remarkable testimony to the results achieved by Archdeacon Brown and his fellow pioneers and their successors. To quote the words of the Maori clergyman who delivered the address in 1938 :—' These men came out with The Word in their hands to a land of not only savages but cannibals, and here am I, a descendant of those people, standing on sacred ground and telling you all about it and inciting you, both Pakeha and Maori, to remember how much you owe to those early pioneers for the peace and safety in which we live to-day.'

" Only once in all the years since 1929 has the weather interfered with the holding of an outdoor service, and on that occasion the Vicar used as his pulpit the beautiful spiral staircase which you noticed in the hall, and which was the first of its kind to be built in New Zealand. From this he preached to a congregation which overflowed the hall, the drawing room, the dining room, the kitchen, the porch and even the landing above his head, and then stretched out in the rain into the grounds, where people stood under the trees to catch such fragments of the service as could reach them at that distance. It was indeed a testimony to the value attached to these services when such a congregation attended under conditions

which might well have justified postponement, and which certainly led me to anticipate a total of not more than a dozen or so.

" In 1935 there was a rather interesting sequel to the first of these services :—My brother Max and I were sitting at our midday meal when I noticed a Maori clergyman pass the window. I went to the door and invited him to come in. He replied ' You remember long ago, the service down there,' (pointing to the bell), ' A long time ago.' ' Oh yes,' I replied. ' Were you there?' and on his replying in the affirmative, I again pressed him to come in and join my brother and myself at lunch. He still hung back, however, saying ' Too much trouble. Too much trouble.' ' Nonsense,' I said. ' You have been travelling and must be tired. Come along in and have something with us.' 'But I would like to bring my wife,' he said, 'to which I countered ' That's alright. You fix a day and bring her any time you like. We shall be very glad to see her.' ' But,' said he, ' she is here now. She is waiting for me down by the gate.' At this I felt the position was getting too complicated for me to handle alone, so I called my brother and explained the state of affairs to him and he quickly settled the further protests of ' Too much trouble ' by going with the clergyman to the gate and bringing back his wife.

" When the meal was finished, Max took them round the grounds, and on their return I joined them in the drawing room. The clergyman was engaged in deep conversation with my brother, and his wife was standing in the middle of the room, gazing at the various things in the cabinets and on the walls. As I entered, she gave a deep sigh and said ' All the things good. All cared for. All the pictures and the pretty things. All the trees growing. Why the Pakeha die? I'm sorry.' That woman seemed to absorb the whole atmosphere of the place and to realise how much Brown and his work had meant to her and her race.

" That evening my brother asked me to listen to a paragraph he had just written, and on hearing it I said, ' Max you must write your book,' and so was born his ' Recollections and Reflections of an Old New Zealander.' For long he had had it in contemplation, but it was the visit of this simple couple, and their manifest love and appreciation of the historic spot and all for which it stood, that actually fired the train and gave him the impetus to start the work."

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