

married Miss Abiah Eastman, a hearing neighbor, who was of much assistance to him, being a woman of uncommonly good sense. He was a successful farmer, and could always make himself understood by signs. Uneducated though he was, many an anecdote is told of him to show his keen native humor, which found ready pantomimic expression and was always appreciated. He lived to be over eighty-seven, although his last years were feeble ones.

Thomas Brown entered the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb at Hartford, Conn., as a pupil, May 22, 1822, being then eighteen years of age. His native town annually assisted him in paying his educational expenses until legislative action rendered it unnecessary. He remained a pupil for five years, and resided at the Asylum for two years longer, occupied in the cabinet-shop and in monitorial capacity. The letters which he wrote home during his pupilage—a number of which were found among his papers—show his progress to have been uncommonly rapid, his appreciation of advantages keen, and his moral sensibilities to have been aroused and cultivated. They also evince an anxiety that others of the deaf should come to the same knowledge.

He left Hartford in 1829 at the solicitation of his parents. He had other plans in life, and opportunity seemed to offer for him to carry them out in the Ohio Institution; but his filial affection overruled everything and sent him back to care for his parents while they lived, and, as it afterwards proved, to spend the remainder of his life (fifty-seven years) upon the same farm, and finally he had to rest in the same quiet cemetery.

He married April 1, 1832, Miss Mary Smith, a deaf-mute of Chilmark, Mass., by whom he had two children: a hearing daughter who died young; and a deaf-mute son, Thomas Lewis, who has been for many years a teacher in the Michigan Institution. Mrs. Brown was an amiable woman, with fine sensibilities, large-hearted, intelligent, and industrious, and an ornament to society in Henniker. Her death was a severe blow to her husband. Some years later he married a hearing woman, Mrs. Sophia Sumner, of Leeds, Maine, who survives him.

Mr. Brown was a fine-looking man, of tall and rather slender but powerful build. He had a fine large head, with gray eyes, high forehead, slightly receding; hair naturally brown, turned white in later life; and a full beard of reddish color, streaked with white. At conventions of the deaf he towered

THOMAS BROWN.

BORN FEBRUARY 25, 1804: DIED MARCH 23, 1886.

So ended the life of a man who, while he was neither rich nor famous, made his way through the world creditably, and left his mark therein, having done much for his deaf brethren, and being able to look back with satisfaction upon four score years spent in trying to improve the talents and the limited advantages given him.

He was born in the village of Henniker, N. H. His father, Nathan Brown, was a deaf-mute like himself, but never had opportunity for education, being far advanced in life when the art of deaf-mute instruction was introduced into America. He

above his brethren like Saul of old, and always evinced a lively interest in the proceedings, in which he took no insignificant part. He was a successful farmer, always knowing how his affairs stood, keeping a strict account of all out-goes and incomes. He was practical, methodical, deliberate, and far-seeing. Slow in making up his mind, he was correspondingly firm after arriving at a conclusion. He was not demonstrative; he was quiet but "set" in his opinions, but never held an opinion for which he could not give substantial reasons. The redeeming feature of this "setness" was that he was always open to conviction, from whatever quarter it might come.

In politics he took an active part, and also in town affairs, with both of which he was familiar. He often wrote speeches to be read at political gatherings, school meetings, and the like. He was sent as a delegate from his native town, in 1851, to the Democratic Convention to nominate State officers, and was a member of various other political gatherings. His speeches show sound, good sense, and were not without influence. He was a Democrat of the Jeffersonian type, and could maintain his ground well.

Of religion he made no public profession until late in life; but his daily walk was one which none could impute to other than Christian motives. He left behind him a diary and other papers, in which, for many years, in addition to his business transactions, he jotted down his thoughts and feelings. Through all, whatever the circumstances—and he had his full share of adversity and affliction—there is apparent a deep sense of submission to the good Father of us all, grateful recognition of mercies received, expressions of thankfulness, and a deep sense of his own insignificance and unworthiness. His main reason for making no public profession of religion earlier in life—he was not lacking in a knowledge of creeds, for he had studied them extensively—may probably be found in the following, which is incorporated into his diary:

When a Congressman once asked Mr. Lincoln why he did not join some church, he replied: "Because I found difficulty, without mental reservation, in giving my assent to their long and complicated confessions of faith. When any church will inscribe over the altar the Saviour's condensed statement of law and gospel—Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself—that church will I join with all my heart."

While Mr. Brown was very independent, he was always ready to hear the other side. He would yield to the dictates of con-

science, but rarely bowed to the whisps of policy. Isms were his abhorrence. Himself overflowing with gratitude for all favors, and always planning benefits for others, because he himself had been benefited, ingratitude, of all things, cut him to the heart.

As a farmer he was intensely practical, and had much more of an eye for the useful than for the beautiful. This he sometimes showed in a striking way. He was once taken through the Public Garden of Boston by a friend, who descended eloquently upon the beauties thereof. Mr. Brown took it all in silence, except to object to such expense in caring simply for flowers, and walked on with bent head and indifferent air until, in passing a flower-bed, he espied a lonely stalk of Indian corn growing there. Then he straightened to his full height; his indifference vanished, and he expressed his pleasure at having "discovered at least one *useful* plant in that vast expanse of wastefulness."

He was a hard worker. He was constantly improving his farm as much as his means allowed. He built miles of substantial stone fence, which still remain as monuments of his industry. His cattle, vegetables, and poultry were no strangers at county fairs, and brought him many a premium. He was a good horseman, a reliable wheat-grower, a good neighbor, and a respected citizen. He was of a sociable nature; had a keen sense of humor, and a peculiarly dry wit of his own, which, if it did not crop out on every occasion, had the virtue of invariably "going home" when it did show itself.

He was never known to grumble at his deprivation of speech and hearing. There is no trace of dissatisfaction with his lot in life to be found in any of his writings, but an expressed determination to do the best he could. Although living in a somewhat secluded part of the Granite State, his house was the favorite and frequent resort of those who knew him, and his hospitable roof has sheltered many who loved and honored him. Some yet living can recall many pleasant associations connected with the old farm-house among the hills.

Mr. Brown was always willing to do his share, and more, to forward any plan which promised to promote the welfare of his class. It was under his roof that the Constitution of the New England Gallaudet Association—the first organization of its kind in the country—was framed by a committee of deaf-mutes appointed for the purpose. He was the first president of the

Association and held the office for twelve years, and was an honorary member for life thereafter, never losing his interest therein. It was at the Second Convention of the Association, held at Concord, N. H., in Sept., 1856, that the Rev. Wm. W. Turner, in a speech at the banquet, alluded to Mr. Brown as "The Mute Cincinnati of America," a title which clung to him ever thereafter. He originated the idea of a testimonial to Messrs. Gallaudet and Clerc, the pioneers in American deaf-mute instruction, which took the form of a silver pitcher and salver, appropriately inscribed to each of them. He was President of the day on the occasion of the presentation, Sept. 26, 1850. He was first Vice-President of the Gallaudet National Monument Association, President of the National Clerc Memorial Union, and first Chairman and then President of the Granite State Deaf-Mute Mission, organized by himself. He was also a member of the Gallaudet Centennial Memorial Executive Committee, and a Trustee of the Beverly, Mass., Industrial School. In all these positions he worked faithfully for the objects in view, and the success of more than one of them was largely due to his personal efforts and to his far-seeing shrewdness.

His farm—127 acres—was divided into lots of mowing, pasture, tillage, orchard, woodland, sugar-bush, etc., and each lot had a name—was dedicated to some friend or relative. The Rev. Wm. W. Turner once visited him and found him at work in a certain lot. That lot was ever after known as the Turner lot. There was a Gallaudet lot, a Clerc lot, a Peet lot, a Weld lot, and others. Thus did the practical and grateful old farmer keep green the memory of his benefactors and his friends.

Any one watching him at work on his farm would soon have evidence that his attention to the work in hand was largely mechanical, and that his thoughts were elsewhere. He always carried a note-book and pencil about him, and would often drop hoe or rake, or stop his plow in the furrow, to jot down an idea or record a conclusion. These jottings he wrote out at leisure, putting many of them to practical use and leaving more behind well worth using by others.

He was well acquainted with common law; was a thorough student of human nature, and could "see through a mill-stone" as far as most men. He was never ashamed to confess ignorance and ask for information; and, having a retentive mem-

ory, seldom had to ask for a repetition. He was a genial old man and made friends wherever he went. One side of his face had a habit of slightly twitching at intervals, giving it a peculiar expression. This was the result of meeting an ox in a barn doorway when a child. The animal tossed him out of the way, tearing open one side of his face and impairing his control of the facial muscles. Physically powerful, his grasp was frank and hearty, and often unintentionally made the slender hands of others ache. He generally wrote with a quill, making his own pens, and excellent ones, too.

In his later years there was considerable correspondence and conversation between him and the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet concerning religious matters, especially baptism. During a visit which the reverend gentleman made to West Heniker in Feb., 1885, the subject was again referred to, and Mr. Brown received the ordinance then and there. As Dr. Gallaudet expresses it:

"I had prayed earnestly that it might be my privilege to receive my venerable friend into the Church of Christ by Holy Baptism. * * * I am very sure he received that Holy Sacrament in the right spirit. I never performed the mysterious act with greater pleasure. My old friend had often told me that he had held me as an infant in his arms, and now it was my turn to take him, figuratively, in my arms—I the minister of Christ and he the little child. I believe the angels have borne him to the rest of Paradise. He was a good man, and did much for his deaf-mute brethren."

For some time before his death he was feeble, and able to get about but little, but he kept his diary regularly up to March 12. On his eighty-second birthday, February 25, he expresses himself as "thankful to Divine Mercy, who has graciously blessed me to live till to-day. Let Him be precious to me awhile at His wisdom." His last entry, March 12, is made in a hand which differs but little from that of more vigorous days, and closes thus: "May Almighty God be merciful to me and teach me to love and praise Him."

After this, his bodily strength slowly failed, but his mind was clear to the last. His son Thomas was with him during the closing days of his long pilgrimage. Early in the morning of March 23, Mr. Brown awoke and very quietly requested Mrs. Brown to call Thomas, as the end was near. Mrs. Brown stepped into the next room and instantly returned with Thomas,

but the patriarch soon passed away, without sign or struggle.

The funeral was plain, as was consistent with the life and known wishes of the deceased. In his right hand was placed a gray goose quill—his favorite, with which he had written much, and which was supposed to be the last he used. He was buried by the side of his first wife, Mary, who had preceded him to the "Land of the Leal" nearly twenty-five years.

For him death had no sting. How should it, when it but flung wide the gates of immortality and ushered him into a new existence with all his faculties unimpaired? Over him the grave had no victory, for it was but the entrance to eternal life.

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