

A FEW

OLD TARANAKI SETTLERS



HOSE who took part in the early settlement of Taranaki are fast passing away from this earth, and old age has set its visible impress on those who are still spared; and in course of nature it is to be expected that every year will witness the departure of increasing numbers to that new country from whence no travellers return. In a very few years the numbers of those who took part in the early settlement of the colony—who bore the heat and burden of the day, and of whose brave deeds

and steady perseverance all later comers have reaped or are reaping the benefits—will be very small indeed. Already those living belong to a past generation, and a new generation is arising, and fast replacing their successors. Yet the history of the early days of their settlement, of the stirring events, strange scenes, startling incidents, ludicrous occurrences, great difficulties, brave efforts, hair-breadth escapes, and heroic steadiness of purpose remains practically unwritten. We give on another page the portraits of a few of the pioneer settlers who took part in founding the settlement of Taranaki, who are still living, and who we hope will remain hale and hearty for many years to come:—

MR F. A. CARRINGTON.

The 'Father of the Settlement,' as Mr Frederic Alonzo Carrington is very appropriately called in Taranaki, is a gentleman verging on his eighty-fourth year, and is as hale, hearty, and cheery as he was forty years ago. Mr Carrington's life has been a very eventful one, but our limited space prevents us giving more than a brief outline of his adventurous career. When a young man he entered the Ordnance Survey Department of England, being appointed to that position in January 1826, by the Duke of Wellington. Showing a natural ability for topographical delineation and survey work he soon attracted the attention of the eminent engineers of the day, and when the Reform Bill was passed in 1832, he was selected by the Parliamentary Commissioners to describe the boundaries of the boroughs in the districts from Bristol to Manchester. For his services on that occasion he received the special thanks of the Commissioners. His several acquirements and the particular gift he possessed of being able to accurately delineate a country, was the reason he was selected by the Plymouth Company as its chief surveyor to go to New Zealand to choose a site for the settlement the Company proposed forming there. On his arrival at Wellington he interviewed Colonel Wakefield, and obtained from him all the information possible for the furtherance of the duties he had to

perform; and after securing the services of 'Dickey Barrett (the well known and experienced whaler) to act as pilot and interpreter, he left Port Nicholson for Taranaki with the view of selecting a site for the new settlement, the pioneers of which were then making arrangements in England for emigrating to New Zealand. On February 12, 1841, Mr F. A. Carrington and family together with his brother Mr Octa-

vius Carrington (who was his chief assistant) and the survey party arrived off Taranaki. The ferns and undergrowth were thick over the land at the time, reaching even to the sea shore, so it was a difficult matter to obtain a knowledge of the features of the country which is so essential when having to fix the site of a township. With great labour lines were cut through the dense vegetation, and a spot cleared—and after much difficulty the site for the Town of New Plymouth was laid out and surveyed under Mr. F. A. Carrington's directions. In September, 1843, Mr Carrington returned to England and on his arrival in London he found that the Directors of the New Zealand Company (which had absorbed the Plymouth Company) were thinking



Wrigglesworth & Binns, photo., Wellington.
MR. F. A. CARRINGTON.

of ceasing their functions for a time, and accordingly Mr Carrington retired from their services, receiving a very complimentary testimonial from the Directors. Mr F. A. Carrington was soon engaged in connection with the railways, a mania for making them having about that time commenced in England. He surveyed lines, prepared plans, and made models of engineering works where difficulties occurred on the ground, so as to elucidate the same before the Railway Committees in the Houses of Parliament; and some of these models, at the request of the Prince Consort, were sent to Buckingham Palace, and Mr Carrington was personally thanked and complimented by His Royal Highness. During the time he was in England (1844-51) Mr Carrington gave a good deal of his time and attention to New Zealand matters, and tried to make Taranaki better known to the British public. Mr Carrington took with him to England a quantity of the Taranaki iron sand, and after having a very careful analysis made of some of the sand by Messrs Dymond of Holborn, he requested the same firm to have a bar of iron cast under their immediate inspection. He then took a sample of the sand and the bar of iron to the metal-brokers in the Royal Exchange, London, and desired them to give him a report upon it. Some days afterwards Mr Carrington called to hear the result, and one of the brokers—for there were two in the room—said, 'this iron is as good as Sykes' iron,' and the other added, 'it is better.' Mr Carrington asked them what was the value of Sykes' iron, and was told that if he wanted that information for the purpose of forming a company he had better get the market price from the agent for Sykes' iron who had offices at Charing Cross. Mr Carrington followed the broker's advice, and he learnt from the agent that the price in the market for Sykes' iron varied from £37 to £42 a ton. At this time Scotch pig iron was £2 10s a ton. Mr Carrington then saw one of the gentlemen he was negotiating with on the matter and having told him respecting the enquiries he had been making respecting the value of the iron, the gentleman remarked to Mr Carrington, 'You must have made a mistake, I never heard of such a price for iron. You must mean first-class steel.' Mr Carrington assured his friend that he had made no mistake but to make doubly certain he determined to see Sykes' agent again. He did so; when that gentleman expressed himself strongly on the matter, saying: 'There are only five thousand tons of "Sykes' monopolised iron" allowed to come into England per annum, and it is used for making all the finest steel ornaments, surgeons' instruments, etc. Most of the trade are ignorant of this matter. Sykes' iron (not steel, as I told you before) varies in price from £37 to £42 a ton.' On Mr Carrington returning to the gentleman he was negotiating with he found with him Mr John Bethel, brother of Lord Westbury, the Lord Chancellor, and Mr Bethel said that the statement

was quite correct; that Sykes' iron—not steel—varied in price from £37 to £42 a ton. Mr Carrington then entered into a lengthy correspondence with the Colonial Office, endeavouring to obtain a grant of the beach on the Taranaki shore, which resulted in his being requested to call at the office to receive the Secretary for the Colonies (Lord Gray's) decision on the matter. Mr Carrington was then informed that his request could not be granted, but Lord Gray had instructed the chief clerk to say that his lordship would give Mr Carrington a letter to the Governor of New Zealand, which on arrival there would ensure a grant of the beach being given to him, provided it had not been leased to any one before. As it would have taken too long in those days to have visited New Zealand and return home again with the desired information, the matter was for the time abandoned; but Mr Carrington exhibited the bar of iron and some of the Taranaki iron sand at the Exhibition of 1851, when he called the attention of the Master-General of the Ordnance Department (Sir H. De la Beche) to it. Mr Carrington also had a map engraved from his drawings showing the topographical features of the country around Taranaki. After visiting California three different times from London, in connection with mines, water-races, railways, etc., Mr Carrington again returned to New Zealand, having been absent nearly fourteen years, his object being the utilisation of the iron sand and other matters in connection with the district; and being backed by men of capital and standing, who took great interest in the colony, hoped to start the iron industry in Taranaki. The North Island was in a very unsettled state at the time owing to the natives showing an antagonistic attitude towards the Europeans, which in 1860 ended in hostilities which lasted for ten years. In 1862 Mr Carrington was appointed Government Engineering Surveyor for Taranaki, and in that capacity carried out in connection with the military authorities the road construction necessary in the district. On peace being restored Mr Carrington turned his attention to local matters, and consenting to be nominated as Superintendent of the province of Taranaki in 1869, he was returned by the electors and held that position till the provinces were abolished in 1876. He was also elected to a seat in the House of Representatives and held the position for several years. He retired from politics in 1880 finding that the late hours and the excitement of Parliamentary life were not conducive to his health. Seeing the necessity there was for Harbour accommodation at New Plymouth, Mr Carrington has for years agitated in the hope of getting protective works built that shipping might visit the port in safety. During the time he was in London in 1844-57, he was always urging the matter on those who had an interest in the district; and both as Superintendent and member of the House he was persistent in his advocacy for a harbour being built at Taranaki. It was chiefly through his exertions that a fourth of the land revenue of the district was set aside for Harbour purposes and a Harbour Board created which raised the money to carry out the work. On February 7th, 1881, Mr F. A. Carrington laid the first stone of the present structure thus crowning his labours as the founder of the Settlement of Taranaki.

MR OCTAVIUS CARRINGTON.

When the Plymouth Company in 1840 sent as its Chief Surveyor Mr F. A. Carrington to superintend the formation of the New Plymouth settlement, they chose his youngest brother Mr Octavius Carrington as Chief-Assistant Surveyor; and prudently dispatched these two gentlemen by different ships, so that if disaster should overtake one of the vessels and not the other the affairs of the Company might not be necessarily brought to a standstill. Mr Carrington was a pupil of the celebrated George Hennet, M.I.C.E., London, then in very extensive practice, and who, associated with the eminent engineer Robert Stephenson, laid out the London and Birmingham railway line, and subsequently, associated with the equally eminent engineer Brunel, laid out the Great Western Railway line from London to Bristol. Mr Carrington was employed on both these works during his pupilage. After acquiring a thorough knowledge of his profession he received the appointment of Assistant-Surveyor on the Ordnance Survey, which position he held under Major-General Colby, R.A., during the years 1835-37. Previous to leaving home for New Zealand he was also engaged in the survey of the Cheltenham and Great Western Union Railway line (under Hennet and Brunel), and the Salis-



Collis, photo., N. Plymouth.
MR. OCTAVIUS CARRINGTON.

bury and Exeter Railway line (under Hennet and Stephenson); and was Assistant to the Engineer-in-Chief of the South Eastern Railway. He was specially offered the office of assistant to the Surveyor-General of South Australia, which he declined. Mr Carrington arrived at Wellington in the *Staines Castle* in January, 1841, and at New Plymouth in the *Brougham* on February 11th, 1841. He belonged to the staff of the New Zealand Company until



Wrigglesworth & Binns, photo., Wellington.
MR. THOMAS KING.