



Mr. James Garland Woon.

The subject of this sketch is the youngest surviving son of the late Revd. William Woon, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary, and one of the first missionaries to New Zealand and the Friendly Islands. Mr. Woon was born on the 23rd December, 1838, and after spending the first eight years of his childhood in his native place—Mangungu, Hokianga—he accompanied his family to Auckland in January, 1846, to which place they and a large number of settlers were taken in the Government brig "Victoria" by order of Sir George Grey, then Governor of New Zealand, in consequence of the hostilities with "Johnny" Heke, the celebrated Ngapuki rebel chief who commenced the war in the north by cutting down the flagstaff at Kororarika, Bay of Islands. In April, 1846, Mr. Woon accompanied his parents to New Plymouth, (Taranaki), and in May to Taranaki South, where his father was stationed for some years as missionary to the Ngatirnanui tribe. In November, 1847, in company with an elder brother (deceased) he left Wanganui for Auckland to attend school there. Up to 1849 the two boys attended the Auckland Academy, and afterwards matriculated at the Wesleyan College, where the youngest boy remained until 1853, when he left and was apprenticed to one of the largest businesses in Auckland, the head of which, however, died nine months after, thus leaving the youth free. After remaining with friends in Auckland for some time, and picking up enough as clerk in a store to keep him going, he left Auckland under orders from his parents, and rejoined the family in Wanganui in October, 1855. At this time Woon joined the

Civil Service as clerk in the Post Office at Wanganui. In 1856 he was appointed clerk in the Customs Department under the late Captain Charles Sharp, collector at Wanganui, and remained in that position until 1863, when Captain Sharp was appointed President of the Marine Board at Wellington, and recommended the Government of the day to appoint Woon, acting collector at Wanganui, in his place. This recommendation was given effect to, and as Mr. Woon satisfactorily discharged his duties as Collector of Customs, Postmaster, and Sub-Treasurer of the General Government during a very trying time he was confirmed in the appointment and made full collector, etc., in 1865. In June of 1878, Mr. Woon was transferred to Greymouth, West Coast, he being succeeded by Mr. David Lundon, since retired upon pension. Mr. Woon remained in Greymouth as Collector of Customs until September, 1890, when he was transferred to Hokitika, where he remained until March, 1892 when, along with several other Collectors and Officers of Customs, he was retired upon pension. Before leaving Greymouth Mr. Woon was presented by the business people and the leading citizens with a handsome gold watch, locket and chain. For many years during Mr. Woon's residence in Wanganui, where he is best known, he took an active and leading part in musical circles, having been choirmaster of Christ Church (Anglican) for several years, a member of the Philharmonic Society as flautist, secretary, etc., and for two years before he left Wanganui conductor of the Harmonic Society. Before leaving Wanganui in 1878, Mr. Woon was presented by the leading citizens, amateurs, etc., with an illuminated testimonial and a purse of sovereigns in recognition of his services in the cause of music generally. When he left Greymouth in 1890, he was presented by the amateurs there with an illuminated address. During the 12 years that he was in Greymouth he was choirmaster of Trinity (Anglican) Church 10 years, and conductor of the Choral Society two or three years as well. Since Mr. Woon's return to Wanganui in September, 1892, after being compulsorily retired from the Government service by the late Premier, John Ballance, he has entered into business as a customs and commission agent, etc. He still takes a lively interest in musical matters and is at the present time conductor of St. Mary's Catholic Church choir, and a member of the Orchestral Club, etc.

Verily the Yanks are the most enterprising of novelty hunters—and finders. There is to be an exhibition at San Francisco next winter, and an engineering novelty is announced to be one of the attractions which will, it is stated, knock into a cocked hat the Eiffel Tower of Paris, the Ferris Wheel of Chicago, and the "Castle in the Air" (supported by balloon) of the coming Antwerp exhibition. The novelty is to be a "Mammoth Figure of Justice." The figure of justice is to be 150ft. high, and the scale beam in her hand 300ft. long, each pan of the scale will seat 50 people, who will swing to a height of 288 feet.

The framework of the structure is to be of steel, the scale will be moved by machinery, and there will be telephone communication between the pans and the engine room. If we don't have any more libel actions, we may do a Pacific slope of an honest and legitimate kind next winter. 'Fair Play' is specially interested in anything that has to do with justice. Latterly it has had a bitter experience of what it considers gross injustice!