

New Zealand in 1863 with his parents, who joined the great Nonconformist movement to establish a special settlement at Albertland, north of Auckland. After arrival in New Zealand, he was apprenticed in the office of the *Southern Cross*, the oldest and most influential journal in the colony at that period. Three years later he obtained a transfer to the literary staff as shipping reporter, and in 1870, at the age of twenty, became sub-editor of the *Daily Southern Cross and Weekly News*, which were then owned by Mr. (now Sir Julius) Vogel, Colonial Treasurer. Compelled by ill-health to relinquish night work, he resigned and joined the editorial staff of the *Auckland Star*, assuming the chief editorship in February, 1875, a position which he still retains, having also acquired a partnership interest in that paper, the *New Zealand Farmer*, *New Zealand Graphic*, and the large printing and publishing business connected with those journals. In the scant leisure which falls to the lot of the editor of a daily newspaper, Mr. Leys has done much literary work. He contributed the Auckland section of Sir Julius Vogel's "New Zealand Hand-book," edited the "Early History of New Zealand," covering the period from the earliest times to 1845, and also the "Colonist's Guide," a standard textbook for settlers in New Zealand. He also edited for sixteen years the annual issues of the "Auckland Almanack," a valuable compendium of statistical and descriptive matter relating to New Zealand. Being one of a party formed at Rotorua on the day after the Tarawera eruption to visit Rotomahana and ascertain the condition of the Terraces, he wrote a graphic description of that great volcanic outburst, which was published in separate form. Among his minor literary works, are a brochure on "The Doctrine of Evolution" in reply to Professor Denton, and notes of a holiday excursion to the South Sea Islands, entitled "The Cruise of the Wairarapa." In 1891 Mr. Leys represented a syndicate of New Zealand journals at the Federation Convention in Sydney. The *Star*, during the past twenty years, has been a consistent and vigorous exponent of advanced Liberal views; and in October, 1892, the Hon. John Ballance, by the unanimous wish of his Cabinet, offered Mr. Leys a seat in the Legislative Council. The offer was declined on the ground that, while heartily sympathizing with the efforts of the Government to reform and liberalise the Council, Mr. Leys felt that his literary work had a paramount claim on his time, and that he could probably render better service to the Liberal cause as a journalist by remaining outside the Legislature than if he became a member of the Upper House.

Tea Table Gossip.

The gaieties lately have been chiefly confined to progressive euchre parties, given by Mesdames Tolhurst, W. Johnston, J. Duncan, Gavin, Heywood, Rotherham, Ross, Stafford, &c. This kind of entertainment is extremely popular just now, and certainly the rooms look very pretty dotted with the small tables, surrounded with bright eager faces.

There have been one or two afternoon At Homes—one given by Mr. and Mrs. Travers, at which the German band discoursed sweet music, and one by Mr. and Mrs. W. R. E. Brown.

The Count and Countess de Jouffrey are to arrive in the Gothic, and will occupy the house in Hobson street now occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Brown, who are going home to England on a visit. Mrs. Charles Pharazyn, Miss Pharazyn, and Mrs. Stratton Izard are also going to the Old Country.

Wanganui people are to be enlivened by several dances. Their great event (the Cavalry ball) is to come off early this month, and is sure to be a brilliant affair. Mrs. Steadman, from Wanganui, is at present in Wellington on a visit to her mother, Mrs. Robert Pharazyn. Mr. and Mrs. Jones, from the same town, stayed for a few days at Mrs. Barrauds on their way to Sydney and Melbourne, where they are to spend a few months.

The Star Boating Club ball is fixed for the 12th July. This event is always looked forward to with great interest, and is

generally one of the most successful gatherings of the season. There is also a whisper of some private theatricals coming off shortly, in which several charming lady amateurs are to appear, so it seems that after all we are to be gayer than we expected.

The improvements of the Parliamentary grounds are almost complete. If not so picturesque, the grounds will certainly look more imposing than of yore, with the swooping carriage drive and great electric lamp. As I heard a young lady remark the other day, "You know, dear, it is more up-to-date, now; of course, one misses the old trees, but the place did have an early settlement look about it with that narrow path, and the little poky gates." I am glad to hear that they have considerably improved the Ladies' gallery; women will, doubtless, take a more than ordinary interest in politics this year, and the place is sure to be crowded.

The Parliamentary grounds presented a more than usually animated appearance on the 22nd June, when the Governor proceeded to the Legislative Council Chamber to read the Speech from the throne. The Chamber was crowded. A short time before the arrival of his Excellency, the Consuls emerged from a small room where they were closely packed, a mass of gold lace and cocked hats, and orders of various nationalities. In their company were Captain Graham and some of the officers of the man-of-war now in harbour, and Sir Walter Buller, who looked most imposing in his brilliant uniform. Considerable interest was taken in the arrival of Mrs. Stewart and Lady Augusta Boyle, accompanied by Captain Clayton, A.D.C., and the Hon. Allan Boyle. Mrs. Stewart wore a black dress, stylish light grey cloth jacket, made with a very full basque and large sleeves, and trimmed with black passementerie, jet bonnet with bows of pink velvet and jet aigrette. Lady Augusta Boyle wore a grey costume and black hat. The Ladies Alice and Dorothy Boyle wore dresses of dark red cloth with broad folded belts of red silk, black hats trimmed with red; Miss Holroyd a black costume.

His Excellency was attended by Major Elliot and Captain Stewart, whose uniform of the 20th Hussars is new to us, and was much admired.

Amongst the ladies, I noticed the Lady Mayor, wearing a very handsome black brocade dress, sealskin jacket, and bonnet with upstanding bows of magenta velvet; her sister, Mrs. Higginson, wore a stylish costume of olive green, and bonnet to match; Mrs. Grace was dressed in dark blue, made with an open coat, with a pretty waistcoat and bonnet; Miss Grace a black costume; Miss Alice Grace's gown was very effective, being of dark brown, with shoulder capes edged with gold braid, hat trimmed with roses; Mrs. Tolhurst was wearing a handsome black watered silk, braided with gold, bonnet of gold passementerie; Mrs. Friend was in black, large black hat with feathers. There were several other pretty costumes, but as a general rule the effect of the dresses this year is very sombre, not to say dowdy, the prevalence of black and brown being anything but pleasant to the eye. The red of the Ladies Alice and Dorothy Boyle formed quite a pretty note of colour in the general subdued surroundings. However, the uniforms were bright enough to compensate for the loss of the usual gay dresses of the ladies in the Chamber, amongst whom I also noticed Miss Pearce, Miss Duncan, Mrs. Dowell, Miss Buller, Mrs. Rhodes (in a handsome black costume and jet bonnet), Mrs. Wardrop (in light grey), Mrs. Loughnan, Mrs. Faratt, Mrs. Graham, Mrs. Smith, the Misses Heywood (in large hats and feather boas), Miss L. Halse (in a pretty fawn-coloured tweed dress), Mrs. Maskell (wearing a stylish grey costume, with full basque and shoulder cape), the Misses Williams, and Mrs. Mantell.

The public took great advantage of the view from Molesworth street, the whole new iron fence being lined three or four deep with spectators, also the fence up Hill street; and the Heretaunga Light Horse Cavalry had some difficulty in keeping space clear for the carriages. We ladies were quite in love with the Wellington College Cadets, whose soldierly deportment and splendid marching give great promise of future performances as defenders of their country.