

PARLIAMENTARY SILHOUETTES.

(BY BIRD'S-EYE.)

THE Postmaster General is my subject to day, and a very agreeable one he is; agreeable for several reasons—first, because he is one of the good-looking men of the House; secondly, because his manners are, like his smile, very prepossessing; thirdly, because he has a nice voice which he can use in debate with excellent effect without ever overstepping the bounds of legitimate criticism; fourthly, because he is an able and successful Minister; fifthly, because he is a charming and popular member of society; sixthly, because he is a devoted husband and affectionate son; and seventhly, because, so far as appears, there is nothing objectionable about him.

(Owing, probably, to his happy combination of agreeable with more sterling characteristics, the Hon. Mr Ward has had the good fortune to attain to an eminent position in the very meridian of his days, for as he was born in 1857, his years now number only some thirty five, an age when most men who begin life without peculiar advantages are still grinding away at the foundation of their fortune's edifice. Mr Ward, on the contrary, appeared his as though by magic, and, apparently, was able to 'command success' from the outset, a result, however, not at all attributable to 'accident,' or 'luck,' but the outcome of superior business faculty, united with integrity of conduct, and, doubtless, aided by his pleasant manners.

I am sorry not to be able to claim Mr Ward, absolutely, as a compatriot, since he was born in Melbourne, but, as he was brought to New Zealand while still a small child, he is the very next thing to the genuine article, and, certainly, his career is one in which we may all take pride. He began it very early in his 'teens, when he entered the Post and Telegraph Department, in which he remained some three years, acquiring experience which has since proved useful, and gaining an insight into its working and drawbacks which has stimulated him, in his capacity of Postmaster-General, to introduce many needed reforms.

But in those days his enterprising spirit and mental activities found no field for their exercise in a department in which he necessarily occupied a very subordinate position; so, quitting the service, he entered a counting house, where for four years, he applied himself to garnering in stores of commercial knowledge, and to obtaining a practical acquaintance with the details of mercantile life. Five years later, while scarcely of age, we find the courageous future Minister established in business on his own account, in Invercargill as a wholesale export grain and produce merchant.

Fourteen years only have elapsed since then, but such has been Mr Ward's phenomenal success, that, besides owning extensive establishments at the Bluff, Gore, and elsewhere, his grain stores at Invercargill now cover an area of three-quarters of an acre: and he is on the point of erecting extensive warehouses in the Empire City, having, for that purpose, acquired a first class site adjoining Queen's Wharf. Various other commercial enterprises have received an impetus from Mr Ward's connection with them, and he has also, with a view to encouraging and developing Southland pastoral interests, established important freezing works at the Bluff.

Although Mr Ward's commercial faculties displayed such an early and rapid development, it must not be supposed that all his energies were absorbed in the accumulation of 'filthy lucre.' Nothing, indeed, could be farther from the truth, for his temperament was such as to dispose him to the full enjoyment of the pleasures and pastimes natural to unspoiled youth, and he therefore found time for field sports, and aquatic contests; for music, dance, and song. He is very fond of music, and sings very well indeed: his voice being a pleasant baritone. He is fond of dancing, and, indeed, of all social pleasures, and is excellent company; he excels in after-dinner speeches, his remarks being brief, pointed, and felicitous.

His public life began soon after his majority when he was elected to a seat on the Borough Council of Campbelltown, of which he subsequently became Mayor. He was also for many years a member of the Bluff Harbour Board, for a considerable part of the time filling the position of Chairman. In all local enterprises he was to be found taking a foremost part: the Invercargill Athenaeum, the Campbelltown Cricket Club, the Southland Rowing Club, own him as President; he is a member of the Invercargill Chamber of Commerce, and is also Captain of the Bluff Navals, a corps he was chiefly instrumental in forming, and which, at the time of the Parihaka troubles, proved its patriotism by offering its services unreservedly to the Government.

Mr Ward entered the House of Representatives in 1887, having successfully contested the Awarua seat. During that Parliament he displayed the judicious reticence of a wise and modest man, but the financial ability characteris-



Wrigglesworth & Binns. photo. Wellington. THE HON. MR WARD.

ing his occasional speeches secured him an attentive hearing whenever he felt impelled to address the House. At the last general election his return to Parliament was unopposed, and, on the formation of the Ballance Ministry, he was offered a seat in the Cabinet. His acceptance of the portfolio of Postmaster-General was hailed with very general satisfaction, for his peculiar qualifications were widely known, and his courteous manners had made him popular with men of all parties. His management of his department has been such as to win him the esteem of all his subordinates, and many useful reforms attest its excellence, the greatest boon being his system of classification for the officers.

Mr Ward represented the colony with conspicuous ability at the Australian Postal Conference, where he did good service for New Zealand. Our Postmaster-General is very well-known in the other colonies over which he has travelled several times. In Sydney and Melbourne he has many friends his figure being almost as well known in those cities as it is in Invercargill.

Mrs Ward is, as Mr Ward's wife should be, a charming and graceful woman; her pretty slight figure is above the medium height, her features are good, complexion bright and



Wrigglesworth & Binns. photo. Wellington. MRS WARD.

clear, manners very agreeable, her fair hair is turned back from a smooth, open brow, her eyes are of a clear, soft grey, and her smile exceedingly winning. Like her husband, Mrs Ward enjoys society, and social pleasures, and is

passionately fond of music. Politically, she has no personal ambition, being quite content to gather laurel wreaths by proxy; the vote she thinks women are entitled to, but she feels no overpowering interest in questions of Woman's Rights, and regards with aversion any suggestion of the possibility of the weaker sex some day occupying seats in the country's legislature.



In Auckland: Some pretty frocks were worn at the hunt lunch at Alberton. Mrs A. Kerr-Taylor looked charming in navy blue with gold and navy braid passementerie; Miss Kerr-Taylor wore black, with a white vest, which was exchanged for a black cloth habit with shirt front and collar, in which she looked very pretty; Miss Mildred was in becoming tomato-red braided with black; Miss Violet, in a similar costume; Mrs (Colonel) Dawson wore ruby, with fur boa; Miss Banks, navy dress, pale blue vest, three-quarter jacket with racoon fur, hat to harmonize; Miss Larkins was in grey, with black and gold bonnet; Mrs W. Rattray wore a dark cloth dress, cape lined with crimson, hat to match; Miss Scherrf looked well in her warm jacket, small brown and drab hat; Mrs Bloomfield's dark green habit and silk hat suit her golden hair to perfection; Mrs Ware looks stylish in drab, small Derby hat; Miss Bull wears a navy habit (all these have manish shirts visible at the throat); Mrs Ching looked well in black dress, cock's feather boa, and small black hat with a wing in it.—In Christchurch: The numerous friends of Mr and Mrs Pat Campbell were very glad to welcome them back from England after a two years' absence, a special welcome being accorded the little daughter. Piper McKay and several other friends went through to Lyttelton to be the first to greet them, and no doubt the strains of the bagpipes were quite intelligible to the returning wanderers who have been educated up to it. I was told (says our correspondent) he (the piper) was playing, 'The Campbells are Comin' and other appropriate airs, but I never can distinguish one from another. Mr and Mrs Campbell are at present staying at Warner's until they find a suitable house, which we hope will be in or near Christchurch. Admiral and Mrs Murray-Aynsley are also visitors at the same hotel. The Admiral is a brother of Mr Murray-Aynsley, Riverlaw.—In Dunedin: At Miss Dymock's wedding some remarkably handsome dresses were worn. A number of the new styles of bodices made their appearance, suiting some of the wearers admirably. Among these Mrs Morris wore a handsome silk dress, and carried a large yellow bouquet; Mrs A. Morris (junior), stylish costume of grey trimmed with grey silk, and large grey epaulets, grey hat to match; Mrs J. Roberts, handsome black silk with long coat body, black and yellow bonnet, large bouquet of yellow daffodils; Mrs Ridings, olive green silk; Miss Spence, pretty fawn tweed with zouave body, vest of brown velvet, black lace hat with yellow flowers and black velvet strings; Miss G. Neill, stylish costume of green and crimson with long coat bodice; Mrs Michie, grey dress trimmed with black lace and black and pink bonnet; Mrs G. L. Denniston, black and white silk with jet trimmings. Amongst those that have looked nice in the street lately are Mrs Turton, wearing a very handsome fawn tweed, the skirt, gauntlets, and collar edged with a narrow brown astrachan, black feather boa, and black bonnet; Miss Zein, brown check tweed, long black coat, black hat with feathers; Miss M. Williams, grey tweed, the bodice and skirt edged with grey astrachan; Miss Alexander, chocolate brown tweed, grey fur boa, and grey felt hat trimmed with grey feathers; Miss Gibson, stylish costume of fawn trimmed with brown; Miss Siewright, embroidered French grey cashmere, gauntlets and vest of white embroidered with silver, large black hat; Mrs W. Heslop, handsome brown tweed.—In Hastings: Mrs Cross was in town wearing a pretty blue grey gown, very pretty boa to match and stylish hat; Miss Barker wears a fawn gown, becoming little capote; Miss Tipping looks very stylish in a dark gown, black jacket, black Bond-street hat with broad cream band; Miss King-well is wearing a most becoming vieux-rose tweed gown, black net hat with ribbon bows to match the gown; Miss Gleeson looks neat in a fawn tweed gown, blouse, cut-a-way jacket, stylish hat.—In Napier: Mrs Jarvis wears dark red gown, small white sailor hat, with red band; Mrs Wells (Danevirke) is staying in town. She wears a very stylish dark costume, white waistcoat, stylish hat. Lady Whitmore is in much better health since coming to reside in Napier. She has a charming residence on the Esplanade, called 'The Blues'—a very appropriate name, as the house is sky blue. Mrs Fairfax Fenwicke has been laid up at the Masonic Hotel with a severe cold. She is about again, and is wearing a rich brown costume, becoming hat; Mrs Gore looked well in grey tweed gown (tailor made), small bonnet with yellow flowers; Miss Hamlin looked very charming in town, she was wearing a grey skirt, light blouse, grey jacket, exquisite hat with birds; Miss Carrie Sutton looks well in dark gown, blouse with frills, rustic hat. Miss Claudia Shaw has been on a visit to Wellington, she is looking very stylish in a new dark costume, becoming hat.

A man can hire a house in Japan, keep two servants, and live on the fat of the land, all for a little over £4 a month.

An insult from certain sources is a compliment. When an ass kicks at you he does so because he recognizes that you are unlike him.

THE Book of the Season: 'FRANK MELTON'S LUCK.' Price, One Shilling. All Booksellers.