

PARLIAMENTARY SILHOUETTES.

(BY 'BIRD'S-EYE'.)

PAINSTAKING, conscientious, and reasonable, the chosen of Picton-Waimere, Mr E. W. Mills, bids fair to develop into a most useful member of the Legislature. His Parliamentary experience has as yet only extended over two sessions, but already he has shown no little adaptability, and considerable aptitude. Brilliant gifts he does not lay claim to, but he knows how to keep silence with open ears, is not above asking questions when he wants information, evinces an honest desire to get at facts, and a very decided repugnance to 'red herrings' and similar devices by which new or verdant members are often sought to be mystified. Mr Mills is blessed with a very fair allowance of that not too common quality—common sense, and though in other respects he may not tower conspicuously above his fellows, this quality, combined with considerable and varied ex-



Wrigglesworth & Binns, photo., Wellington.
MRS E. W. MILLS.

perience of colonial life, should enable him not only to do good work himself, but should make him act as a useful check upon more reckless legislators.

Mr Mills, though he looks younger, is close upon the half-century, having been born in 1844 at Nelson. He is therefore the oldest European New Zealander in the House. In his younger days he gained a practical knowledge of much of the rough work incidental to colonization. At sea and on land he was equally at home, and nothing came amiss to him from furling a sail to shearing a sheep. Gold-mining also engrossed his energies for a time, and for many years he has acted as 'Miners' Advocate' in Warden's Court.

In former days Mr Mills was a member of the Nelson Provincial Council, and since Provincial abolition has taken



Wrigglesworth & Binns, photo., Wellington.
MR E. W. MILLS.
(M.H.R. for Picton, Waimere.)

his share of local administration, having been actively engaged on Road Boards, County Councils, Hospital, Education, and Charitable Aid Boards, not to mention minor bodies.

Mr Mills' first attempt to enter the House of Representatives was made in 1887, when he stood against Messrs A. P. Seymour, and Harkness. He was beaten on that occasion by a small majority, but, nothing daunted, came up again cheerfully to contest the election of 1890. On this occasion he was opposed by Messrs R. Hursthouse and G. Phillips, both of whom he had the satisfaction of leaving far behind, his majority being 212.

Since his entrance into Parliament the member for Picton-Waimere has been a consistent supporter of the present Government, whose measures generally have been in accord with his political views. Mr Mills has already done no little useful work on the 'Petitions Committee,' where his capacity for patient investigation is well known, but in the House he is content with the modest position of one who has something still to learn. Should no election reverse occur a Parliamentary career of much usefulness should await him.

Mrs Mills was born in Scotland, but came to the colony while quite a child. She is a bright, cheery little lady, who carries her years with the vivacity of girlhood. To look at her you would never imagine her to be the mother of eight children, half of them arrived at maturity; but such is the fact. Mrs Mills takes a good deal of interest in politics, and is an ardent supporter of woman suffrage.

HOW KIRBY FINISHED HIS TAKE.

A PRINTER'S STORY.

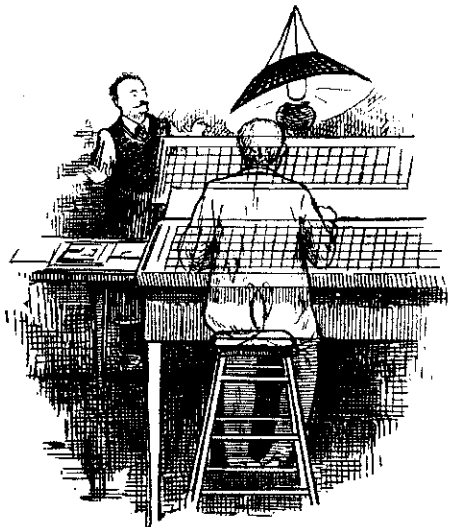
SLUG 3 was standing with his back to the stove, smoking a cigarette. By the way, Slug 3 generally is smoking a cigarette; his quod box is about half full of snipes most of the time.

'You remember Parker's place before the fire, don't you? Dark, awful dark, even for a basement; just a little streak of daylight at the top of the window at one end; had to keep the glim on all day. You worked there didn't you, Mac.'

Mac owned to having worked there a few days; he didn't remember much about it. None of the other boys had been there.

'Strangest thing happened there I ever ran across, and I've slung type in every State in the Union and most of the Territories.'

Slug 3 stopped and blew a ring of smoke, waiting for some one to ask him to go on. Johnny slid up behind the stove and stood leaning on his broom. That boy scents a yarn like the war horse sniffing the battle from afar.



'BUT THE GHOST SET JUST AS STEADY AS A MACHINE.'

'It was a job office, and had considerable work and a good force of men on. A sprinkling of old timers were there, prints I'd worked beside at all points of the compass—Bill Allen and Scotchby and Bill Kirby. Kirby was a little wiry fellow, with a moustache too big for his face. Hard drinker Kirby was, never had anything ahead—he'd blow in a week's wages one day and be around bumming the boys for a dollar the next. On that particular day there was a rush, and the foreman was wild and all the men pulling away for dear life. About ten o'clock in came an old chum of Kirby's from Portland, and nothing would do but they must go and have a drink together. The foreman said he shouldn't go, but Kirby was bound that he would. He knew the foreman wouldn't hardly dare fire him, because prints were so scarce, so he was bound to go.'

'You finish that brief first,' said the foreman. 'There's only about a galley more of it and it's got to be off this afternoon.' We'd several of us been setting on the brief, but that morning we'd been switched on to a paper and Kirby was to finish the brief. But no, Kirby said his friend was going out on the afternoon train and he wouldn't stick another type that morning; he'd come back after dinner and finish the take. At that the foreman got pretty mad; said he knew what Kirby'd do; he'd go off and get drunk or get run in or something, and wouldn't show up again for a week. Then Kirby be up and swore that his word was as good as any man's, and that dead or alive he'd be back after dinner and finish that take, and he went.

'When we went down town to dinner there was a big crowd in front of the OK saloon and everybody seemed excited, as if something had happened, and sure enough something had happened, for there'd been a general row and one man had had his arm broken by being piled up against the bar, Kirby's friend had a bullet in his shoulder and had been carted off to the hospital, and Kirby himself had his head smashed in with a beer bottle and was having a kind of one-sided interview with the coroner. Dead as a mackerel, Kirby was. It kind of spoiled our appetites for

dinner. "I guess Kirby won't finish his take," said Matthews.

'Well, one o'clock came and of course we were all at our cases but Kirby. The foreman went around with a face like a thundercloud, but still things went pretty smooth for about half an hour, when Jimmy Maxwell who had the case next to Kirby's, back in the last alley, came up and said he was sick and would have to go home. The foreman just boiled at that, said that was the way some men did, they would catouse around all night and then soldier around next day and cheat the office. That was hard, for Jimmy was the straightest man in the shop, but he never said a word, he just got his hat and made for the stairs as if his life depended on getting out of that. He did look sick, too.

'About 3 o'clock Matthews was told to go over to Jimmy's case and finish his story, so over into the last alley he went, and in two minutes back he came with his eyes as big as saucers. "May I be cut into bits," he said—you know how Matthews talks; "may I be cut into bits," he said, "if Kirby ain't back there a-finishin his take!"

'The foreman stared as if he thought he was crazy. "You've been drinking again," he said. "Parsons, you go over there and finish Jimmy's story." I kind of bated to go over in that alley, and I've got pretty good nerve, too, but I knew the boys would laugh at me if I didn't, so I went and picked up the stick, and I just pulled away and never looked at Kirby's case. I put my eyes right on the copy and stood turned a little sideways, but all the time it seemed as if I must look, and the more I made up my mind I would not look the more something seemed to pull me that way. Then I thought what a fool I was, and I turned around and looked right at the case. Sure enough there stood old Kirby himself, bobbing away with a funny little motion of his shoulders that was all his own, following his right hand around with his stick as he gathered that small pic in a way that was surprising even for a ghost. To say that I was scared would be drawing it mild, but I drew myself together and went on with the story. Presently the ghost turned around and crossed the alley, and as I am a living man if there wasn't a galley on the opposite case nearly full. He dumped his stickful and went back to his case, and then I saw that he was on the last page of the brief. Once he sneaked around into the next alley and came back with a fistful of quads—just like old Kirby, always swiping some. My hair was just standing on end and I could feel a cold sweat all over me, but I was bound I'd see it out, for I knew he was nearly through. I shook so I couldn't hardly hang on to a type, but I stood there with my teeth chattering, and pretended to work, although I didn't get up more than a stickful of brevier in as much as an hour, and the proof was so dirty that I had to set it over again. But the ghost set just as steady as a machine, though I couldn't hear the click of the type nor a sound of any kind. All of a sudden he set down his stick, gathered up the copy and straightened it out and hung it on the dead hook, emptied his stick, and put his rule in it, and set it up on his case and turned round and nodded at me in a sort of friendly way, and the next thing I knew I was alone in the alley. Then I went and told the foreman, and he swore the whole force was crazy, but I took him back there and showed him that galley of type, and it rather staggered him. The men came crowding around and looked at the galley; it was the last take of the brief all right enough, but it made them feel creepy and they did not offer to touch it. The boy wouldn't take a proof of it for love or money, but the foreman was mad by that time, and he said he would prove it and make it up too, if the devil himself set it up, and he did, and the brief was off that afternoon on time. But if you'll believe me, when we came back to the office next morning there was the forme, which had been left locked up on the stone, unlocked, and the sponge lying by it, and every line of that type that the ghost had set up was gone and Kirby's case was full, just the way he had left it the morning before when he went off with his friend.' Slug 3 stopped and lit another cigarette.

'Oh, come off,' said Johnny, 'you had a jag on.' Johnny is an irreverent youth. As for myself, I don't believe in ghosts; nevertheless, who did finish Kirby's take?'

SLUG 11.

WANTED MORE PRACTICE.—'No, Bobby,' said his mother, 'one piece of pie is quite enough for you.' 'It's funny,' responded Bobby, with an injured air, 'you say you are anxious for me to learn to eat properly, and yet you won't even give me a chance to practise.'

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