

PEOPLE TALKED ABOUT

Crack Pigeon Shot.

Mr. T. Parker, of Napier, Hawke's Bay, whose portrait we give this week, has a remarkably good record as a pigeon shot for the season 1904-5. He



MR. F. PARKER,
of Napier, champion pigeon shot in New Zealand.

uses a Hollis gun and Amberite cartridges. A glance through the following list will give some idea of his calibre:

Waipukurau Open Handicap, Easter, 1904 (30 yards).—Killed 20 out of possible 20, 19th and 20th just falling dead

a few feet outside 40 yards boundary. Killed the first 18 with first barrel.

Building Match, Open Handicap, King's Birthday, 1904 (29 yards).—Killed 20 out of possible 20, 11th bird just falling outside 40 yards boundary. Killed 17 with first barrel.

Hawke's Bay Open Handicap, 19th June, 1905 (30 yards).—Killed 15 out of possible 15, 12th bird just falling outside 40 yards boundary. Killed 12 with first barrel.

Won N.Z. Championship Meeting, 20th June, 1905 (28 yards).—Killed 24 out of possible 25, one getting right away and another falling outside 60 yards boundary. Killed 18 with first barrel.

In the above four matches it will be noted that 79 birds fell out of a possible 80. Only one got right away, but five dropped dead outside the boundaries. The second barrel was only used fifteen times, sixty-five falling to the first barrel.

✱ ✱ ✱ ✱ ✱

Mark Hambourg.

Am I, then, among the veterans that I should be asked to tell you about my youthful days (writes Mark Hambourg, the famous pianist, in the "Days of My Youth" series in "M.A.P.") Well, well, on reflection, I find I cannot deny the by no means soft impeachment. When I came to England in 1890 as a "prodigy" I used successfully to levy a tax of a pound of sweets on every kiss I gave to the ladies in my audiences. Now, alas! this sweet source of sticky revenue has dried up, and the tax is just the other way about—indisputable proof that I am no longer young.

On June 1, 1879, I was born at Bogut-



A VETERAN OF THE AUCKLAND STOCK EXCHANGE—
"TEDDIE" WOOD.



THE LATE MR. JOHN HAY,

United States Secretary of State, who died a few days ago at the comparatively early age of 67. He was one of the most distinguished statesmen in America.

char. in the province of Veronez, where Peter the Great built his ships. Although I am a Russian by birth and parentage, my name, as people have remarked to me, is far more German than Russian. But it must be remembered that there is a strong German element in Russia, dating back to the reign of Peter the Great. Peter, realising that the country needed new blood, invited foreigners to come to settle in it, and the Germans were the first and practically the only race to take advantage of the offer. It is a curious fact that these settlers, although they made themselves at home, never learned Russian, and to this day there is a big district on the Volga where the only language spoken is the German of 200 years ago. From one of these emigrants, then, we are descended.

My father was director of music at the local conservatoire, and so from the very first I breathed a musical atmosphere. This, of course, had much to do with my precocity, for atmosphere is everything to the development of an artist.

I am told by my father that my first musical efforts were made at the age of eighteen months. My nurse used to take me to hear the band in the gardens, and with my small fist I used to

follow the conductor beat for beat. After a time he took notice of me, and would try to put me out by superfluous flourishes, changing the time, and so on, but always, so I am told, I was able to follow him.

My next efforts at conducting were in the Conservatoire, of which I had the free run, but I do not remember that they were very successful. However, during these early years I was always playing and breathing in music. When I was about six years old my aunt, as a surprise for my father's birthday, got me to learn a rather difficult composition by heart, for naturally I could not read music then. The "surprise," indeed, surprised my father, and forthwith he took me under his tuition. Then it was I realised the difference between playing as play, and playing as work. I did not take at all kindly to the latter, and used to mangle shamefully, deliberately striking splinters into my hands to escape the hated practising. However, my father persevered patiently with me, and at last came a day when ambition awoke in my breast, and the drudgery was drudgery no more.

In 1888 my father was appointed Professor at the Moscow Conservatoire, of which the late Grand Duke Nicholas was president, and I continued my studies there. One night the students gave a grant concert, which was preceded by a dinner, to which I was invited. Everybody was very kind to me, and someone asked me to have a glass of champagne. I had no idea what champagne was, but I had some, liked