

Mr. John Darling, jun., M.P.

AGRICULTURAL produce, a great national resource of South Australia, lacked for many years a convenient and systematic form of expansion and export. A few city merchants and large farmers attempted to open up markets across the seas for colonial produce; but their proceedings were irregular and their success limited by the



Hammer & Co., Photo

comparative smallness of their undertakings. Mr. John Darling, the father of the subject of this biography, with a far-seeing eye a clear, calculating instinct opened up a channel of extensive and expanding business activity in connection with the grain trade of South Australia. Mr. John Darling, jun., became a partner with his father, and the business eventually assumed very large proportions.

John Darling, jun., was born in Edinburgh on January 24, 1852. Four years after his birth his parents left their native shores for Adelaide. The son was some time afterwards sent to school, and in the meantime the father of whom a biographical sketch is given in succeeding pages entered into business pursuits. His capabilities were soon asserted in the Province. He saw his course, he planned his career, and started his commercial

machinery. Considerable difficulty was experienced at first in organising his intentions and methods of procedure; but Mr. Darling, sen., gradually surmounted all obstacles, and with great financial acuteness carried his business on with ever-increasing success and profit.

When, in 1866, Mr. John Darling, jun., completed his education, he entered the counting-house of his father. After gaining a thorough acquaintance with the various details of the business, he became a partner in 1872, and the firm was thereafter known as J. Darling & Son, millers, grain and general merchants. Mr. Darling had worked hard during his term of apprenticeship, and, as a partner, showed an exhaustive, well-acquired knowledge of the work in which he was engaged. The business grew rapidly.

The efforts of the firm were severely taxed to cope with the increasing trade, while considerable exertions were used in opening up influential relationships with British and foreign commercial houses. To expedite and assist matters in this direction, Mr. Darling made an eminently successful trip to England by way of America in 1881. Another visit to the home country was undertaken in 1894 by Mr. Darling, jun., in the important interests of the firm. The nature of its commercial pursuits necessitated close association with the leading marts of the United Kingdom for the export trade. The firm has established its claims to be considered among the largest grain merchants in Australasia; and it has branches in Victoria, New South Wales, and Tasmania.

Mr. Darling, jun., has identified himself with many commercial ventures outside his own particular business as a wheat and grain merchant. In intercolonial and coasting shipping he has been largely interested for the last 27 years; and he has held the responsible post of President of the General Employers' Union of South Australia. This honorary position is by no means a sinecure. On the contrary, the efforts, energies, and skill of its prominent members and officials have often been called into active and anxious requisition. The presidential office holds within its province the lever for much good and harm in the relations obtaining between employer and employé, and diplomacy, tact, and discretionary judgment are not only in constant exercise, but are indispensable to the safe guidance of the Union. He has also been Director, for several years, of the Port Adelaide Dock Company, and has also occupied the presidential chair of the Shipowners' Association of South Australia. His interests in mining centre largely round the famous Broken Hill mines; and in 1892 he was appointed a director of the Broken Hill Proprietary Company. His able services as President of the South Australian Chamber of Commerce in 1891, also in 1899, gave abundant proof of his comprehensive knowledge of commerce and finance.

In April, 1896, Mr. Darling, jun., was returned for the electorate of East Torrens, and as a parliamentary representative he has more than exceeded the favorable expectations formed of his political capabilities. He has proved himself an earnest politician, careful of the interests of his constituency, and zealous for the prosperity and well-being of the Province in which he has so large a stake. As an authority on finance, he has few peers in the House of Assembly.

The principal grain supply of the firm of Darling & Son has lately been drawn from the Riverina and Victoria, there being a compulsion to fall back on these places owing to the disastrous seasons South Australia has unfortunately experienced of late years. Mr. Darling sen., retired from the business in October, 1897, since which time the subject of this sketch has been sole proprietor. On November 1, 1900, Mr. Darling purchased the goodwill of the business so long carried on by Messrs. J. Dunn & Co., together with their Eclipse Roller Flour Mills at Port Adelaide. His commercial success merits the congratulatory admiration of all who can appreciate the magnitude of the business reared, developed, and extended by his own skill and perseverance. Mr. Darling bears with him that influential authority that ever accrues to the acknowledged virtues of a *savant*. His superior standing in the ranks of Australian commerce, his uncommon financial and business qualifications, have attracted to his respected personality profound regard and marks of general esteem.
