PORTRAIT OF MRS. CHAMBERLAIN She Knows When To Talk And When To Be Silent

(From an article in "News Review")

VERY day of his life, except when occasional twinges of gout lay him low, Arthur Neville Chamberlain takes a morning stroll in St. James's Park.

Invariably at his side is his clever, attractive wife Annie. Mostly the walks are taken in complete silence. "The great thing," Mrs. Chamberlain recently confided to a friend, "is to know when to talk and when not to. I know precisely when he wants to talk, and when he would rather I held my tongue."

On a recent Monday, Mr. Chamberlain was not in the Park with his wife. His companion was Sir Horace Wilson, Chief of the Civil Service. That very day Neville Chamberlain had reached the age of 71 in sound health and full vigour. For that, he had largely to thank his wife, who has tended his wants, advised him, taken a keen interest in his hobbies since 1911,

Most public men profess to shun and dislike publicity. Yet if they are ignored for a moment their wails resound to high heaven.

Mr. Chamberlain's Love-Letters

Neville Chamberlain is no exception, but Mrs. Annie Chamberlain is truly content to play her part behind the scenes. She is not, and has never tried to be, however, a "Power Behind the Throne." Mr. Chamberlain has no use for wire-pullers; he likes to have his own way.

Yet 29 years ago, this obstinate, iron-willed man whom some people call "cold-blooded," wrote some of the best, most moving love-letters ever penned. Full of poetry and subtle compliments, many of them are still treasured by his wife.

To Annie Chamberlain, the former Premier is "Neville." To others she often talks of him as "He," but never does she use a diminutive. To him, she is Ann, although Annie is her baptismal name.

The former Annie Vere Cole is the daughter of a Major. She married Neville Chamberlain at St. Paul's Church, Knightsbridge, then patronised by the socialite world as St. Margaret's, Westminster, is to-day.

Her Secret of Success

However much he might have failed as a West Indies planter, Neville Chamberlain made a most successful marriage. His bride was a complete stranger when he took her to his native Birmingham, but within two years her witty Irish tongue and easy manner had made her the city's most famous woman. Still talked of as one of the highlights in Birmingham's history is her period as Lady Mayoress. Locals called her "The Angel."

Her secret was simple. She found out about some trifling personal point which interested the other person, and based her conversational opening on it. Then she let others do most of the talking.

Knowing that it probably meant the end of any private life he might have enjoyed, Annie Chamberlain advised her husband to stand for Parliament. Men friends said it was hopeless for a man of middle age to go into Parliament with any chance of reaching high office. He was around 46 then.

Stage-Managing a Premier

Mrs. Chamberlain is tallish, with golden hair turning silver. She has a soft, musical voice, the eagerness of a child to hear anything interesting-which usually means something about her husband. She enjoys his fame, shares his occasional snobbishness.

The simplest way into her good books is to make some friendly comment on her husband. Then, she will lean across the table, interrupting anybody, and cry: "Darling, Mr. Blank says your speech at Muddlecombe was a terrific success!"

If she stage-manages her husband it is always with subtlety. When Chamberlain came back, flushed with triumph, from Munich, with what looked like peace in his pocket, great crowds outside cheered, yelled for the Prime Minister. He waved his hat, went



MRS. NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN

Mrs. Chamberlain had waited in the hall for his arrival. "What a time it seems since he was here!" she kept repeating. When he appeared she threw herself into his arms, like a girl, with a cry of: "Darling! How marvellous!"

Ignoring the group of officials, the butler, and the footman, she kissed the P.M. eagerly on both cheeks, knocking his hat on the floor.

As if it were the most natural thing in the world, she took him by the arm and led him upstairs, to the open window of the drawing-room. Then she murmured: "Say something to them."

So the Prime Minister provided one of the most famous news pictures of recent times, and his historic - if erroneous -- "I-think-it-is-peace-in-our-time" declaration.

Cooking, Writing and Gardening

She likes cooking - occasionally prepares some favourite dish herself-and even "housework," keeps all the household accounts. "We have never been well off," she says, "and it has been useful to have someone pretty thrifty looking after things." She was inclined to be sharp with the servants at No. 10, but they staved with her.

Between times, she has to take care of many official duties, opening bazaars, writing letters. Her personal mail amounts to about 5,000 letters a year, and she sends out some 6,000. More than half she signs personally: "Yours v. truly, Annie Chamberlain."

Most important job in her list is looking after the P.M. His chief hobbies are fishing, the study of birds, and gardening. Mrs. Chamberlain has made a study of all three, so that she can talk intelligently about them.

It is characteristic of Mr. Chamberlain that he does not mind being out of the fashion, and praising his wife in public: "She has rejoiced at my successes. She has encouraged me in my disappointments; she has guided me with her counsel; she has warned me off dangerous courses; she has never allowed me to forget the humanity that underlies all politics.'

WHEN IS A PINT NOT A PINT?

OR

Eavesdropping On The Drama Department

OW much is a pint?" said one drama expert to the other. His colleague, observing us enter, turned a baffled gaze in our direction, and shrugged his shoulders meaningly.

"Because," continued the first expert, "as you may remember, there was some controversy on the subject of pint handles recently, and even Shakespeare apparently had his doubts-at least, in 'The Taming of the Shrew' the question is disputed."

"You've been reading 'The Taming of the

Shrew'?" we asked.

Yes," he said, non-committally.

"You don't say so?" we said.

"Say so? I should say so," he replied. "It's one of the big productions featured in our programme for the next six months.

Tell us all about it," we hinted.

"What-about pint handles?" asked the drama

expert.
"No," we said, hopefully. "About the productions for the next six months."

"Ah, that's different," he said. "First of all, there are a number of bright comedies. There's Arnold Bennett's 'Cupid and Commonsense.' That's a premier! Then there's Galsworthy's 'A Bit o' Love,' St. John Ervine's 'Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary, A. A. Milne's 'Michael and Mary,' and a whizz"A what?" we said.

"A very merry little play by P. G. Wodehouse," he elucidated, "called 'If I Were you.' Then there's James Hilton's popular 'Good-bye, Mr. Chips,' a comedy called 'Mr. Pratt's Waterloo," by Val Gielgud and Philip Wade, a special play for Father's Day called, curiously enough, 'Father's Day,' and, of course, 'The Taming of the Shrew.'"

"Ah, yes, we've heard about that," we murmured. "Then in slightly more serious vein," he continued undaunted, "there's George Preedy's 'Captain Banner, 'Victoriana No. 8,' and a special Graeme-Holder Christmas play, 'Unimportant People.""

"An attractively varied bag," we commented.

"Ah, but that's not all," he said. "The NBS has purchased the broadcasting rights to the famous

"Inspector Hornleigh' series by H. W. Priwin."

"Wait a minute," we said. "Wasn't that put out in a film version?"

"That's right. Then we've bought the broadcasting rights to 'Send for Paul Temple,' by Francis Durbridge, who's recognised as one of the cleverest of the English radio playwrights. Much of his work has been produced by the BBC. Well, that," he said, "is about the lot."

"And very nice, too," we said. "All these are to be presented from National Stations during the next six months?"

"That's right," he said. "And they're all NBS productions, too. Now about the pint. . . ."

"Excuse us," we said, "we've got an article to

And we left them hotly debating the beer measure.