

AQUATICS IN DUNEDIN.

THE DUNEDIN AMATEUR BOATING CLUB.

THE progress made by Dunedin in aquatic during the last few years has been remarkable. Three years ago only one rowing club existed in the southern city; now there are three flourishing clubs, and rowing

positions since the inception of the Club, while Mr James (Captain) was elected Captain shortly after the formation of the Club. The Captain and Secretary are undoubtedly energetic enthusiasts in aquatic, and have done much to further the interests of their Club. A gymnastic class is held weekly in the hall, and is very largely attended. The members also have a monthly social during the winter, as well as other forms of amusement and instruction.

Our other illustration is that of Mr J. McGrath, a

at Picton this year by Mr M. Keefe, of Auckland, and was (this time with Mr Keefe) also beaten by Hume of Wellington after an unsatisfactory race. He is about twenty-four years of age, and has proved himself to be a clever and plucky sculler.

THE RAMBLES OF A CLOWN.

BY A SERIOUS PERSON.

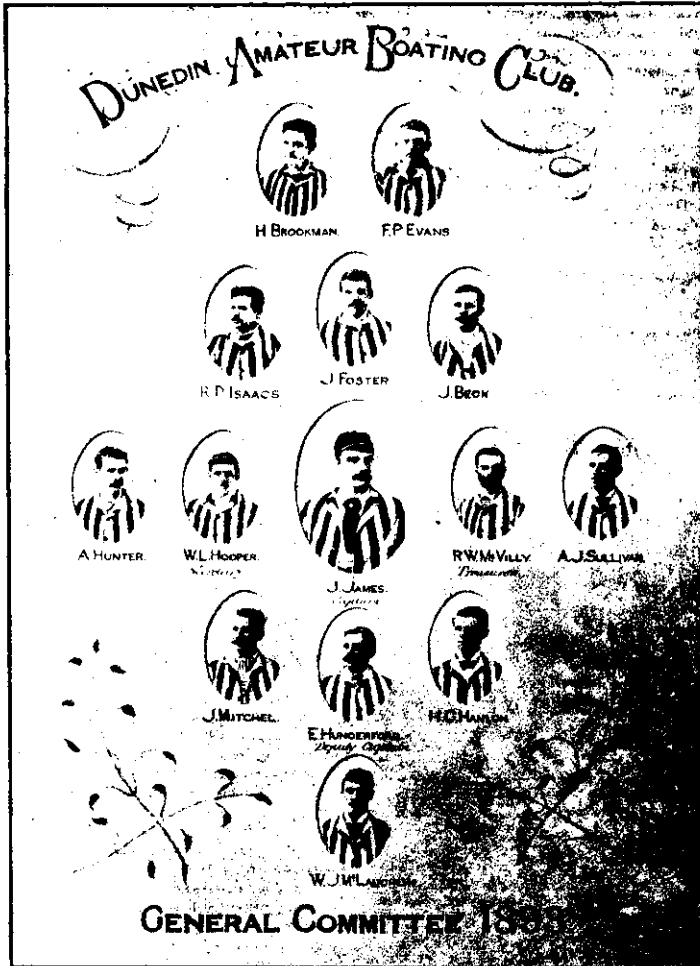
I AM willing to bear with resignation the ordinary lot of mortal man. Amateur theatricals, healthy walks, billions suppers, and uneducated regenerators—I take them as they come in the day's work. But when I find myself saddled with a reputation I have done nothing whatever to deserve, a reputation which stands like a wall between me and the love of my fellow men, and condemning me to everlasting bitterness and boredom, I claim a right to protest against the universe. I am a clown *malgré moi*.

Whence the reputation comes I do not know. I look at myself in the glass, and see the reflection of a sober, middle aged Englishman, fat and statesmanlike, with no infinite humour nor merry eye about me—a simple, straightforward Saxon. It may be that to others my face seems that of a natural low comedian; I do not know. But I should have thought that even low comedians were allowed their moments of seriousness, allowed to share the sorrow and to invite the sympathy of their friends; no such thing is allowed to me. Everybody I know is convinced that whatever I say, on whatever occasion, I intend to be funny. You remember the man in Catullus who smiled on every occasion, at pathetic speeches and funerals, and is reminded that nothing is more inept than inept laughter? That is the sort of man I am supposed to be. Sometimes, even now, a friend will confide his sorrow to me; but he does so with a beseeching look, as one who should say, 'Do recognize that this is a serious matter, and don't attempt one of your silly jokes!' Then I say something appropriate and sympathetic, and immediately my friend smiles a sickly smile, and says, probably, that it is no laughing matter to him. All serious talk is hushed when I go into a room, and people sit with faces of painful expectation, many of them obviously bored at having to leave an interesting subject for inane laughter. If a genuinely funny man is there, they think me a tedious anti-climax. Moreover, I am not allowed to have any sorrows of my own; they are supposed to be invented for other people's amusement. A woman I know nearly had a fit when I told her how I had fallen off an omnibus. I think if my wife were to elope, this friend would laugh herself into apoplexy. I told a man the other day that my Aunt Rebecca was dead—told him quite simply; he roared with laughter, and then rebuked me for making a jest of such things.

I am not only supposed to be destitute of all sympathy with human sorrow, but this reputation of clowning has earned me the reputation also of envy, malice, and all uncharitableness. Thus, if some pitiful lapse of virtue is mentioned to me, and I find excuse for the sinner, I am supposed to be sarcastic and a mean minded fellow. I have an enemy whom nevertheless I honestly admire; if I praise him I am thought sarcastic again, and again mean-minded.

I am supposed to be not only a clown, but a stupid clown. But I put it to you: if every trivial and commonplace remark you make were criticised from the point of view of its being meant as a joke, would not you, too, be thought stupid? The wittiest man alive would not stand such an ordeal. A remark about the weather, or about the political situation, an opinion on the newest religion or the latest play—anything I say is regarded as an attempted joke, and received with maddening indulgence.

And yet I solemnly protest to you I have never seriously made a joke in my life. I remember in early youth upsetting a cup of tea in my hat, and another time bumping my head against a hanging lamp. If these things are responsible for my reputation, it is surely hard that such trivial things should have made me the most miserable man in London, and at times the most hopeless.



W. Esquilant, photo.

appears to have been accepted as an indispensable portion of the curriculum of athletic exercises which the youth of New Zealand undoubtedly favours. The Otago Rowing Club still possesses a large membership, the newly-formed North End Club is rapidly increasing in strength, and the Dunedin Amateur Boating Club is now one of the strongest clubs throughout New Zealand. The club was founded in September, 1891, the idea originating with Mr J. L. Gillies, the popular secretary of the Otago Harbour Board. The initial regatta was a remarkable one, inasmuch as at the first regatta held after its formation the club 'scooped the pool,' and continued on its victorious way, annexing the premier position by the end of the season. The erection of a shed was then mooted, but it was not until the sympathy and services of the ladies that this seemed possible. A successful carnival provided the major portion of the required capital, and now the club possesses a boating shed which compares favourably with any other in the colony, the shed and plant having cost over £1,000.

member of the D.A.B.C., who is undoubtedly the champion sculler of the South Island. He secured championship honors at Lake Forsyth Regatta last year, but was beaten

The boathouse, as will be seen from the illustrations (which are from photographs specially taken for THE GRAPHIC by Mr William Esquilant, of Dunedin), is a substantial and handsome building. The area of ground occupied by the building is about 80 feet by 60 feet, while the staging running into the water is 100 feet in length. The ground floor, where the boats are stored, is divided into three bays, and contains dressing-rooms, shower baths, lockers, and is fitted with all the necessary appliances. The social hall is a large and comfortable room, which is illuminated at night by gas. On the same flat are the committee rooms, balcony, etc. The architect was Mr J. Hislop, and the contractor, Mr G. Hodges.

In addition to the members of the Committee, whose portraits appear elsewhere, the Club possesses an energetic President in Dr. F. Fitchett, and other capable officers in Vice presidents Dr. Jeffcoat, Messrs L. O. Baal, R. Swan, and J. Watson. Dr. Fitchett and Mr Hooper have occupied their



W. Esquilant, photo. Dunedin.

J. McGRATH, SCULLER.