



ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING.

THAT great horse-racing enthusiast, Mr. Merry, once remarked that "he would rather see a donkey gallop than the finest yacht race." Had he joined the gay throng at Mercer last Saturday we think he would have found amusement better suited to his taste than yachting, even though he might miss his favourite pastime. Mercer was truly *en fête*, and remarkable for its mercery. Maori dames and damsels have an eye for colour. Such wonderful reds, greens, yellows, and blues, in startling contrasts and picturesquely hideous harmonies, we never saw. Wherever do the wearers purchase them? That is indeed a mystery. Pleasant it was to see the vice-regal party doing a river promenade in a curiously shabby and water-worn canoe, paddled by a most ancient and fish-like crew of *quondam* rebels. In the Charon of the party we seemed to recognise Ihaka, who once fought a desperate and blood-thirsty fight against the detested pakeha, and is said to have signally distinguished himself by various fearful deeds. Now he peacefully pilots the Kawana and suite over the very waters where occurred the *casus belli* which led to the Waikato campaign. Pleasant also it was to watch the occupants of a smaller canoe. Youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm, in the person of two comely maiden aborigines—in the centre, one of our most popular Auckland bachelors, whose genial countenance beamed like the orb of day; his eye-glass in his ocular and his tasteful *parapluic* arousing reminiscences of Bunthorne and Grosvenor. Little did he reckon of the dark plot which only the loyalty of his crew averted. It is whispered that some evil-disposed person attempted to bribe the crew with half-a-sovereign apiece. The *quid pro quo* was to be the capsizing of the canoe; and it was further urged that another *quid pro quo*, together with a Humane Society medal, might be secured by rescuing their immersed pakeha from a watery grave. But the dusky maidens proved staunch, incorruptible, and not to be bought. Still our friend should take warning; borrowing Widow O'Brien's gagging injunction to Major Tiffin, we bid him "look out for his leg" next time!

At Mercer there is a splendid piece of water for scientific rowing. Would that it were nearer Auckland! Yet even where it is, it should be extremely useful. If ever we improve enough in our rowing to warrant the sending of crews to compete at the regattas held at Wellington, Wanganui, Lyttelton, or Nelson, the selected ones should if possible put in a week or so at Mercer. Such a course would enable them to put on the final polish in style and preparation before leaving. What we saw of the rowing was in anything but good form. Faults in style that would bring down torrents of imprecations upon the heads of even a "torpid" crew—poor reach, bucketting forward, sluggish recovery, backs rounded like caterpillars, bad swing and wretched catch at beginning—all these pernicious defects and others were only too patent. One crew, we are informed—the St. George's Bay Juniors—had been well coached by Messrs. Bloomfield and Thomas, but they unfortunately broke a rowlock immediately after the start, so that we

lost the chance of criticising their form, which is reported to be sound and excellent. We cannot congratulate the promoters on their management of the meeting. Making every allowance for the serious difficulties they had to contend with—the greatest perhaps being the desire to fit in important events with the presence of the vice-regal party—still things might have been kept moving in a livelier fashion, and some attempt made to overtake the lagging time-table.

It is a long lane that has no turning. The Gordon C.C. has at length suffered a defeat, which will do the club good, as nothing is more dangerous than an unbroken series of victories. After an exciting finish United won on the first innings by 16 runs. It will hardly be disputed that the balance of luck was on this occasion largely on the side of the winners. But nevertheless Gordon courted defeat by their own suicidal carelessness. In the first innings only ten men batted—L. Meldrum, a good man, being the absentee. Then more catches were missed than we expect to see by a team with a reputation for brilliant fielding. It seems more than likely that a mistake was made by the umpire when Hawkins had scored about 40; but umpires' decisions must be upheld, so we shall not make further comment on the subject. Hawkins batted pluckily and brilliantly for his 81, and Stenson also did well. With so perfect a wicket on the second Saturday United should have done better; 123 was a poor performance for nine wickets. On Saturday week Auckland and Gordon meet. If Auckland can pull off that match the close of the season will receive fresh interest, as the three leading clubs will be equal in the race for the Cup. Each club would then have been twice defeated. Two matches—Press v. Fun on the Bristol Company—resulted in victories for the newspaper representatives. The ladies of the company mustered in fair force, and chaffed and teased their champions not a little when they ruefully returned to the Pavilion, or muffed the ball in fielding. The first Junior Cup seems now to be narrowed down to a contest between Ponsonby, Wanderers and Gordon II., of which the chance of the last named looks a trifle the best. Three rounds are to be played to decide this contest, so there is no time to be lost, as we shall presently be thinking and talking football.

One cannot help admiring the self-laudation and exultant tone of a section of the Press over its great achievement in the matter of the recent Hospital inquiry. Only a garbled report of the results of the Commission has as yet seen the light, but all sorts of conclusions are founded upon evidence which by no means warrants them. So far as we can make out the very worst that can be alleged is a possible error of judgment on the part of doctors who did see the patients at the time, supposed to be proved by the testimony of medical men who did not see the patients at all, and consequently were not in a position to give opinions of the slightest value in regard to the question of "shock" and the danger or otherwise of operating. The dreadful allegations of neglect, etc., vanished like smoke. The Charitable Aids Board have received far rougher treatment than their action merited. They were

placed in the position they hold by those who contribute to the funds, to see that the rate-payers' money was not wasted. They did their best to decide certain questions before them by pronouncing further inquiry unnecessary. But the Press, worked up by certain interested persons, who wished to abolish the present system and restore the old one of an honorary medical staff—which had already proved quite as faulty—demanded a new inquiry. The Board consented, but that did not satisfy the enemy. No!—they must have a Commission. The result of that Commission, costing the ratepayers some £1,200 at least, has, in our opinion, clearly shown that the Board was right and the money spent on the Commission wasted. Dr. Abernethy once remarked that "My mistakes as a young man would fill a churchyard." How many serious blunders lie buried in our cemeteries—blunders committed by medical men in private practice? A certificate of death in due form saves the reputation of the physician or surgeon, upon whom the fierce light of Inquiries and Commissions does not beat. Truly killing is no murder when a diploma duly registered can be flourished in the faces of impertinent questioners. In the present case doctors as usual differ as to the alleged error of judgment, and, as we said before, those who saw the patients should know better than those who merely say what they might have done if they had seen the patients. Truly "*parturiunt montes, nascetur ridiculus mus.*" A storm in a tea-cup! and we have to pay £1,200 for it. Who stirred it up?

Coming so soon after the recent Championship meeting of glorious memory, one might reasonably expect the athletic sports fixed for to-day to fall rather flat. But exceptional circumstances happily lend their aid, and the gathering promises to be as large and successful as the last one. Entries and acceptances are quite satisfactory, both in quantity and quality. The presence and patronage of His Excellency and Admiral Scott, who take a keen personal interest in athletics, together with the special events placed on the programme for the officers and crews of the squadron, must attract a large attendance. An obstacle race is announced. We hope the barrels of dry paint will not be forgotten, and that the competitors will emerge in colours bright and gay as the leaders of Mercer fashions could desire. That feature of an obstacle race is especially delightful to lady spectators, and we all like to please our fair friends. It is reported that several dark horses will open our eyes at this meeting. One young gentleman, with three yards start in the 100 yards, is said to have done a trial in 9½ secs. Another, rumour hath it, covered his mile in 4min. 32secs., so possibly we may see more record-breaking, if the weather holds up and our fine grass track is in good condition. But seriously, we doubt if a Macpherson or a Derry Wood can be unearthed in Auckland just yet.

The veteran Capt. Jackson Barry's lectures are unique, and in their way amusing and interesting. Artemus Ward once begged President Lincoln to give him a testimonial. Lincoln in his impassive manner took up a pen and wrote: "This is to certify that I have read Mr. A.