

of Hamlet, Horatio, etc.; also that clinking good racehorse Fishhook, and Angler. Perhaps, after reading the above, some of Mr. Dakin's detractors, who were scarcely born when he was racing horses in England, may feel inclined to confess that that gentleman knows a trifle more about "legitimate" racing than they give him credit for. By the way, the Hon. W. Pearson imported a half-sister to Thistle, the dam of Common, named Thistle-down, but she was not a success at the Kilmany Park Stud, and she eventually died.—Well do I remember the above. She gave me a jar.

ATHLETICS, ETC.

SHEFFIELD HANDICAPS.

THE Sheffield Handicap, run at the Zealandia Rink on Saturday night was very successful, many of the heats being very closely contested. There was not so good an attendance as there should have been, as it seems impossible to wean the public from the old Queen-street haunt on a Saturday night. These Sheffield Handicaps are all genuine and should be encouraged. Mr. Winch would do well to hold them either on a Wednesday or Thursday night, as the young men engaged in the shops would then be able to get away. The proprietor has gone to a great deal of expense to make the thing popular, and deserves to be supported. There is not the slightest doubt that several contesting last Saturday, were running with an eye to the big event on May 23rd, but it is to be hoped the handicapper, as well as others, had his eye on them. Mr. E. O'Hare on one or two occasions rather exceeded his duties. We hope, however, that the next one will prove a big success. The following are the results:—

FIRST ROUND.

First Heat—R. Keenan, 11½yds, 1; H. Simson, 7½yds, 2; time, 11sec. Won by two yards.

Second Heat—S. Murphy, 7yds, 1; Purdy, 6yds, 2; time, 11 1-5sec. Won by a yard.

Third Heat—Laxen, 12yds, 1; Webber, 9yds, 2; time, 11½sec. Won easily.

Fourth Heat—J. Johnston, 8½yds, 1; A. White, 14yds, 2; time, 11 2-5sec. Won easily.

Fifth Heat—F. Murphy, 8yds, 1; C. McDonald, 12yds, 2; time 11 4-5sec. Won by a yard.

Sixth Heat—J. McDermott, 7½yds, 1; W. Cummins, 11yds, 2; time, 11sec. Won on the tape.

Seventh Heat—T. Robertson, 11yds, 1; J. Simson, 13yds, 2; time, 12 1-5sec. Won by a yard.

SECOND ROUND.

First Heat—Johnson and Murphy (dead heat). Time, 11 1-5sec. Murphy eventually won.

Second Heat—Laxen, 1 (beating McDonald and Webber); time, 11sec. Won easily.

Third Heat—Cummins, 1 (beating White and Robertson); time, 11 1-5sec. Won very easily.

Fourth Heat—R. Keenan, 1 (beating Purdy, McDonald, and Murphy); time, 10 3-5sec. Won by a yard.

Final Heat—Laxen, 1; Cummins, 2; Murphy 3; Keenan, 4.

FOOTBALL.

THE Football Season commenced last Saturday when the following matches were played:—

PONSONBY V. GRAFTON.

After some good play the match resulted in Ponsonby scoring 6 points, Grafton 2 points. Tries were obtained for Ponsonby by Cole (2), Masefield and Murray, one of which Breen converted into a goal. Madigan and Pennaligan scored for Grafton. There were no umpires appointed. Mr. E. McCausland acted as referee and Messrs. Wells and Hobson as line judges. This is certainly an innovation. The public did not seem satisfied with the result.

GORDON V. AUCKLAND.

The Auckland team were lighter than their opponents, but made a good fight of it. Gordon did some good dribbling. The match ended in a win for Gordon by 6 points to 3. Tries were secured for the winners by Otway, Smart, A. Cooke, and Jervis, the last-named converting his try into a goal. For Auckland Ramsay got a clever try, from which Flynn kicked a neat goal.

GORDON II. V. UNIVERSITY.

This match, greatly to the surprise of many, resulted in an easy victory for Gordon II. by 6 points to nil. The victory was due to the superior combination and dash of their forwards. For the winners E. Rees, T. Adcock, and F. Phipps obtained tries, and Moreton potted a goal from a pass by Meldrum.

PONSONBY II. V. VICTORIA.

A good contest took place between these teams, but the last year's cup winners were too good for their opponents and won by 8 points to 2.

GRAFTON II. V. NORTH SHORE.

This match was played at the North Shore. Grafton II. proved much too good for the local players, and won easily by 12 points.

NATIVE ROSE V. JERVOIS.

This was a regular runaway match, Native Rose winning by 14 points to 4. The Jervois showed some good play, but had disadvantage in weight, strength and experience.

The Pokeno Football Club held their annual meeting on May 8th, when there was a fair attendance. Mr. Rust in the chair. The club through the kindness of Mrs. Lumer has secured a paddock close to the railway station. The following officers were elected:—President: Mr. W. Motion; Vice-Presidents: Messrs. A. M. Rust and Hamlin; Captain: Mr. A. Findly; Deputy-Captain: Mr. A. Craig; Secretary and Treasurer: Mr. J. Dean; Committee: Messrs. J. Dean, A. Craig and A. Findly.

Hutchinson, the crack quarter mile runner, played for Gordon last Saturday. Although somewhat of a novice at football, Hutchie showed promise of developing into a capital back in the near future.

The Wellington Rugby Union have decided to send a team South during the present season.

A football club has been formed at Russell, much to the delight of the natives, who take a great interest in the Rugby game. We wish them every success.

The Tabernacle Gymnasium resumed operations on Friday (yesterday) evening under the conductorship of E. Jones. The membership having reached a considerable number, efforts are being made to secure the use of a larger building.

The following letter is taken from the *Sydney Referee*:—

RENFORTH'S DEATH.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE REFEREE.)

Sir,—I often hear it emphatically stated by people here that the sculler, Renforth's, death while rowing in a race at St. John's New Brunswick, was caused by drugs administered by interested parties before the race. I know there were shady rumors after his death, as there always are in cases of sudden death like that, but I never knew that the drugging was proved, as some assert, or that there was ever anything more definite than a rumor. I wish you would kindly let me know the truth about the matter, so far as you know, and give me all the circumstances, suspicious or not, that you know of in connection with Renforth's death; that is, if it does not intrude too much on your space. His untimely end is often thrown up to Americans as an example of the unfair spirit in which sporting strangers are received in America. The charge of unfairness is a gross libel on the American people. In no country in the wide world will a stranger—be he a sporting man or not—be received with more hospitality and be treated more fairly than he will be by the American public. Hoping you will oblige in next issue,—I am, &c., W. H. Sydney, April 14.

[Will some of our readers, who have perfect knowledge of the case, oblige by writing us on the subject?—ED. R.]

We were residing in Newcastle at the time of Renforth's death, when it was currently reported that he had been poisoned, but on the best medical testimony, his relations and all connected with him were convinced that the cause of his death was heart disease, which neither himself or any one connected with him suspected.—ED. S.R.

ATHLETICS IN CHRISTCHURCH.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

May 2.

FOOTBALLERS were again unfortunate in the way of weather for last Saturday's matches, as rain fell at intervals throughout the afternoon. In no case were the matches postponed, but what with a high wind and a wet field and ball, nothing brilliant was to be expected. At Sydenham great interest was centered in the game between those old rivals, Canterbury College and Sydenham, and despite the adverse state of the elements the large number of spectators were treated to a fast and even game. The College backs proved to be decidedly above the average, and though by playing four three-quarters they have only eight forwards, the new style adopted by them seems to give great satisfaction. Sydenham had the best of the forward play, but their backs did not show to advantage. During the first spell the game was essentially a forward one, and Sydenham more than held their own, with the result that McLean scored a try. Shortly afterwards fine passing amongst the College backs took the ball to their opponents' line, and from a free kick Creswell scored a goal. On changing ends both teams played with more dash, the ball rapidly travelling from one end of the ground to the other. Brilliant play amongst the College backs again had its effect, and Craddock got in between the posts, a goal resulting. From this out the game was very fast, and but for the safe tackling of the Sydenham full back more points would have been added to the score, which stood College 5, Sydenham 1.

At North Park what was expected to furnish a good game between Linwood and Christchurch was shorn of a lot of interest by the weakness of the latter's team. From the kick-off it looked as if Linwood meant business, as in the first few minutes they had twice crossed their opponents' line. After this Christchurch shook themselves together, and for the rest of the spell successfully defended their lines against the invasions of the ex-juniors. In the second spell play was made more even, but Linwood were not to be denied, and another three points were added to the score. Two of the Christchurch forwards had the misfortune to meet with accidents early in the first spell, and for the rest of the game their club was without their services.

Another round for the Junior Flag was decided with the following result:—Rangiora first beat Linwood second by nine points to four; Sydenham second and East Christchurch second made a draw. Merivale second beat Christchurch second by eight points to three; Cambridge defeated Christ College by eighteen points to one; and Kaiapoi beat Lyttelton by eight points to one.

In Otago practice matches are still being indulged in, but so far the weather has been all against good play. Union and Alhambra are showing best form, and it is the general opinion of enthusiasts that the premiership will lie between these two teams and Kaikorai.

May 9.

The senior football matches on Saturday last all furnished capital contests, and though the ground was again rather greasy, this did not prevent some really splendid play being shown. At North Park a large number of spectators assembled to witness the game between East Christchurch and Canterbury College. From the jump it was evident that both teams were in real earnest, and the College forwards foolishly made the game a tight one, which was right into their opponents' hands. While this lasted the East made full use of their opportunity, and had registered a goal to their credit before half time was called. On changing ends the College evidently saw their mistake, and for the rest of the game gave their backs more opportunities. The result was that both Creswell and Balch scored tries, the former being improved upon. This put the College a point to the good, but within a few minutes of time Lee, one of the East backs, ran right through his opponents and equalised matters, the game thus ending in a draw.

A much more brilliant game was that between Merivale and Christchurch, and though the former team won by the substantial margin of 11 points, the game was not at all one-sided. During the first spell the Merivale backs made themselves particularly prominent, and by brilliant runs had succeeded three times in