

(By "The Reefer.")

As was very generally anticipated, Cambridge had very little difficulty in defeating Oxford this year in the great annual Varsity eight-oar race. The water was smooth, there being very little wind, but rain fell throughout. Despite this drawback, there was the customary huge crowd lined along the banks at the various vantage spots to witness the encounter. Oxford won the toss, and chose the Surrey side, but the advantage in position was of very little use to them, for the Light Blues catching the water quickest, immediately showed in front, and at Hammersmith Bridge had a lead of two lengths. This they steadily increased, being four lengths to the good at Chiswick. From this out it was practically no race, Cambridge paddling in the easiest of winners by six lengths, having taken 19min 35sec to accomplish the trip. The annual contests between the two big Universities were inaugurated as long ago as 1829, and the present was the sixtieth occasion on which rival crews have met. Chiefly owing to a long sequence of victories in the sixties, and again in the nineties, Oxford are well ahead in the matter of wins, having thirty-three to their credit, as against twenty-six on the part of Cambridge. The writer witnessed several of these classic struggles years ago, the two most exciting occasions probably being in 1877, when the judge declared a dead-heat, and again in 1882, when the race was rowed in a blinding snowstorm.

A cable received during the week states that the new America Cup challenger, Shamrock III., has had a very successful trial, proving exceedingly smart in stays and outsailing Shamrock I. As far as it goes this is very satisfactory, but it can hardly be supposed that the old boat is as good as she was some seasons ago. The second bearer of the name also beat Shamrock I., but did not prove good enough to wrest the Cup from the New York Yacht Club. We shall get a better line as to the respective capabilities of the rivals in the coming great international struggle after Shamrock III. has been tested against Shamrock II., and a like trial has eventuated between Reliance and Columbia. In the meantime it is satisfactory to learn that the sailing of the new Fife cutter has greatly pleased her plucky owner, Sir Thomas Lipton.

Since writing last week on the matter of the suspension of the Canterbury Centre by the head body, I learn (writes "Clinker") that before the N.Z. Asso-

ciation in Wellington decide to suspend the local Centre, they had several times communicated with the Canterbury Association on the matter, and their letters had practically been taken no notice of. Knowing this, I think the action of the head body quite right. The breach which has caused the suspension (allowing maiden races to rowed in stumps instead of the regulation boats as adopted by the N.Z. Association) has been committed for years, and the matter is one that really should be settled once and for all. No matter what the opinion of the Canterbury Centre is, respect should be shown the head body, and their communications properly acknowledged, and attended to. Such appears not to have been the case—hence the suspension. If, as it is alleged, the Association's boats cannot be used with satisfaction on a course where buoys must be turned, then they should not force Canterbury to adopt them, but allow the stumps to be used as before. When this matter is explained to the governing body I feel sure they will recognise that they cannot be doing right in insisting upon a racing rule being adhered to if it cannot be carried out with satisfaction.

I am very sorry to hear that the sneak thief has again been at his contemptible work on some of the yachts lying at moorings. The vessels which have suffered are the Viking, Moana, and Rangitira, while no doubt others have been equally unfortunate. It is high time a system of water police was established, for the present methods are utterly inadequate to bring the offenders to book.

The Northern Swimming Club gave the visitors to the Carnival a very pleasant outing on Sunday. It took the form of a fishing trip, but viewed from this point of view it was a comparative failure, as only about one hundred and fifty schnapper came to hand. The excursion was, however, a very enjoyable one, for the day was bright and clear, the catering above reproach, while the Devonport band helped to pass the time with numerous and well-rendered selections of music. At the conclusion Mr Hamilton, on behalf of the visiting swimmers, took occasion to thank the local club for the lavish hospitality so freely extended to them.

The absence of Malcolm Champion from the Championship swimming events on Saturday caused a lot of disappointment to the spectators, and was very regrettable. The reason of his being debarred was, I understand, that owing to him having to leave Wellington somewhat hurriedly on the occasion of his last visit he had neglected to pay certain fees to the Wellington Association. These, however, I am told have since been paid to the local club to be forwarded on, and if such is the case it was somewhat hard lines for the local crack to be debarred from competing. I hardly think he would have been equal to beating Hamilton in the distance events, however.



Vaile, photo. MR. CHARLES P. MURDOCH,
First Commodore of the Royal N.Z. Yacht Squadron.

The Coromandel Regatta will take place next Saturday, and bids fair to be a very successful function. Entries for Auckland yachts may be made either to Mr Brentnall, hon. secretary to the Regatta, or Mr F. W. Coombes, hon. secretary to the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, up to Friday evening.

Mr Charles P. Murdoch, whose portrait appears in this issue, is probably the best known yachtsman in New Zealand to-day. He was born on the shores of the Clyde, and as quite a nipper displayed a fondness for aquatic pursuits, being constantly on or in the water. When seventeen years of age he made his first trip to China on one of the celebrated ten clippers, and some of his experiences at Shanghai and up the Chinese rivers are well worth listening to. In 1871 Mr Murdoch arrived in Dunedin, where he lived for some years. At that time he and Captain Gibbs had the famous little

cutter Spray, which may even now be seen at her moorings, off the North Shore, and in her made three trips to Lyttelton, winning on two occasions against the Annie Ogle and others. Mr Murdoch also sailed in the Zephyr and the Gipsy. He came up to Auckland in 1880, and lived for some years on the Manukau side, where he had a steam launch, and did most of his sailing in a whaleboat. After moving across to Devonport Mr Murdoch purchased the Zinita, and later on that very smart 36-footer, the Ida. Starting as a private member of the Auckland Yacht Club, he subsequently joined the committee, then was made Rear-Commodore, afterwards Vice, and finally Commodore, holding each office for two years. He is now the first Commodore of the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron, and is most essentially the right man in the right place. A seaman to his fingers' tips, what "Charley" doesn't know about yachting isn't worth learning, while being of a jovial, cheery nature, there is no more popular member among the ranks of the Squadron.

THE SWIMMING CHAMPIONSHIP.

NORTHERN AMATEUR S.O. CARNIVAL.

There was a large gathering of spectators at the Auckland Graving Dock on Saturday afternoon, when the swimming championships took place. A nor-westerly wind made the water rather lumpy, despite which fact some excellent times were recorded in some of the events. The other centres represented were Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington, and Greymouth. The interest in the chief race was to a large extent spoilt by the absence of Malcolm Champion, the Northern Club crack, who was debarred from entering. H. Creaghe, the seventeen-year-old Dunedin representative, won the 100 Yards Championship in 65 2/5th sec, which beats the previous New Zealand record by three-fifths of a second. J. M. Hamilton made mince-ment of the half-mile record by accomplishing the distance in 18min 34 2/5th sec, which is 42 3/5th secs ahead of the previous best. L. Penrose, of Christchurch, who did 14min 6sec in the race, also beat the standard by nine seconds. In the evening at the fresh-water baths Hamilton lowered the quarter-mile record by 6 3/5th sec. Appended are the results:—

100YDS CHAMPIONSHIP OF AUCKLAND.

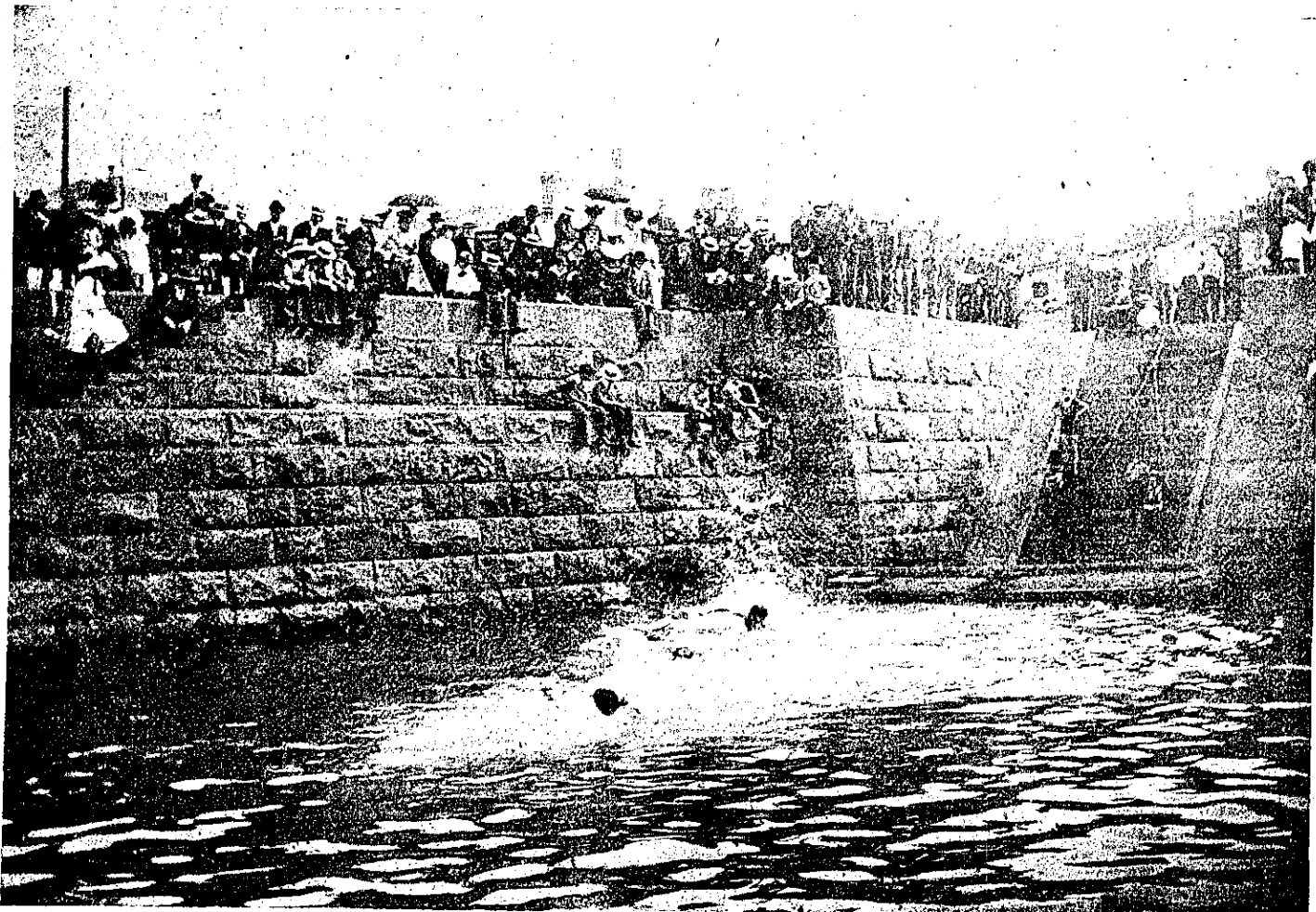
H. Creaghe	...	...	1
J. M. Hamilton	...	...	2

Won by rather more than a yard. Time, 1mi 5 2/5th sec.

50YDS, OPEN.

B. O'Hara...	...	...	1
W. Johns ...	...	...	2

Time, 33 4/5th sec.



C. W. Fuller, photo.

At the Swimming Championship Carnival.