

and in response to the inevitable encore, delighted her audience with Wallace's "Sweet spirit hear my prayer." Mr. T. M. Jackson, in splendid voice, gave Adams' passionate song, "Mona" with care and true feeling, receiving an enthusiastic encore. The band wound up a capital programme with a gallop, entitled "The chase of the lion," by Dubois. This is a fine work, and proved decidedly the best performance by the band, which however played every piece in excellent style during the evening. The attendance at the dance was not large, but those present enjoyed themselves thoroughly, capital dance music being supplied by the quadrille band, composed of Messrs. A. R. Hunter, cornet; Rout, piano; B. Plummer, 'cello; W. Hunter and J. Ewart, violins. Altogether the promoters are to be congratulated on providing a very successful and pleasant entertainment.

LAST week—on Monday and Tuesday evenings—the Auckland College and Grammar School gave some capital dramatic speeches and music in the large school-room. As the space available was not nearly sufficient for the many friends who wished to be present, it was found necessary to give two performances. Even so, the hall was not equal to the demands made upon its limited space, late comers with difficulty finding a corner. But the courteous and efficient stewards, as far as possible, overcame all obstacles, and short of rendering the walls elastic, worked miracles. An excellent orchestra of boys and girls belonging to the school, ably conducted by Mr. Trevithick, comprised twelve violins, piano, harmonium, and drum and triangle. The overture, "Les Marionnettes," by Girelli, went smoothly and in good tune. Robert Walton followed with a violin solo. On the Monday evening he played De Beriot's first air with variations. The young violinist, who I am informed is only in his fourteenth year, displayed tone, tune, execution and musical sensibility to a degree which fairly amazed me. With perseverance and earnest study he will follow in the footsteps of Miss Otie Chew. In response to the ovation which greeted his excellent work, he repeated a portion of the solo. On the Tuesday evening he played Hartog's transcription of "Home sweet home" very successfully, but I thought his performance on the Monday in every way superior. Some scenes from Moliere's "La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas" capitally dressed and acted in French by the elder girls, proved that the teaching of that graceful and precise language goes far beyond the proverbial "Stratford atte Bowe." One or two slight solecisms in pronunciation might here and there be detected, but taken as a whole the performance deserved high praise. Miss Winnie Dudley acted with especial *verve*, and spoke her lines very distinctly. The scenes from "Le Mal de Imaginaire" were given in English by an entirely different cast. Miss Trevithick, as the hypochondriac dressed the part admirably, and acted throughout with intelligence and spirit. As Toinette, Miss Annie Stewart was a perfect little soubrette, and provoked peals of merriment from the audience. The other parts were capably filled and in every case the performer appeared to be letter perfect. I had wondered what purpose two wires were stretched across the stage were intended for. But when the curtain rose for Hayden's Toy Symphony, the puzzle was at once solved by the performers stepping forward, fixing their several music sheets on the ingenious and convenient stand, supplied by the double wires. Aided by the very efficient orchestra, the toys rendered a good account of themselves, and Haydn's quaint and melodious strains delighted everybody. The trumpets, nightingale, dog, drum, triangle, starling, cuckoo, etc., were scientifically handled by the performers. The lady who played the Cuckoo was handicapped by a defective instrument, the interval being incorrect, but it is always difficult to find toy instruments without some imperfection of that nature. So delighted were the audience that a peremptory encore necessitated a repetition of the latter portion of the symphony. Barring that the *tempo* was perhaps rather slow, I have nothing but praise for this number. The scenes from Sheridan's "Rivals" gave the boys an opportunity to display their histrionic powers. Sir Lucius O'Trigger (Mahon) and Bob Acres (Mays) covered themselves with glory. The former has a splendid stage voice and presence, and

his conception, presence and acting of the part stamp him as an actor of first-rate promise. Similar praise is due to "Bob Acres," who made quite a hit. Davy (Upton) and Captain Absolute (Latta) filled the minor parts satisfactorily, and, although comparisons are odious, and it may seem ungallant, I must award the palm to the lads, and place the lassies a good second. To Mr. Carson especial praise is due for the excellent scenery and mounting of the piece. He was deservedly called before the curtain, and received quite an ovation. The performance concluded with a brace of minuettos, by Saint George, neatly and carefully played by the band, and after "God Save the Queen," the audience dispersed in high good humor.

OLD-TIME REMINISCENCES.

[BY OLD TURFITE.]

A CONFRERE in the *Field*, writing about this year's Derby, says that the weather was the worst that he ever experienced—at the same time stating that he remembers 1839, when Bloomsbury won his memorable race in a heavy snow-storm, also Hermit's year, when the race was run under much the same conditions. I confess that my experience of Epsom did not commence until some years after Bloomsbury's day. The first Derby I took any active part in was 1852, when Daniel O'Rourke won, though I had seen many before that. Daniel's year was generally called the "Mud Derby." Stopping at Cheam, I had promised to go to the Downs with Mr. Harry Stubbs, brother of the celebrated "Ginger Stubbs," so well known about town in the days of Beau Brummel and Crockfords, but at this time getting into low water. Mr. Harry Stubbs lived at Sutton, and was a cripple from rheumatism, owing to having been put into a damp bed at Melton after a hard day's hunting. He used to be drawn about in a Bath chair by an old grey pony, and had the privilege of going into the saddling paddock. This is the only wheeled vehicle I ever saw there. Instead of starting in the orthodox Derby costume—dust coats, white hats and veils—it was a case of shooting boots and gaiters. The course was ankle-deep in mud; the many years I visited Epsom it was never in such a state, even in the Spring meeting. On our arrival in the paddock we took up our position under the clump that stands in the middle. We had not been there long before John Scott came up and spoke to Mr. Stubbs, expressing surprise at his being there on such a day, and asked him what he had backed. The reply was, "Nothing." So Scott said, "You had better have something on my horse a day like this." So a commission was sent into the ring, in which I participated, at the nice price of 50 to 1. Twenty-seven horses started, including Stockwell, the winner of the Two Thousand Guineas, and Hobbie Noble, for whom Mr. Merry had given £6,500 as a two-year-old, which was a long price in those days. These were the two favourites. Mr. Stubbs not being able to leave his chair, we took up our position on the Hill amongst the furze, where a capital view of the race could be obtained away from the crowd. On coming round Tattenham Corner, Frank Butler, instead of taking the usual line, made straight for the rails on the upper side of the course, and for a moment it seemed as if his horse had bolted. Going close along them, he passed the post so close under the judge's box that it was said that but for the shouts of the people that the judge would have missed him. Barbarian and Chief Baron Nicholson were second and third. In a conversation I had with Frank Butler in the paddock he said the reason he took that course was that he had noticed that from the number of people walking on the upper side it had made it sounder going, and that he believed that he could have won on either of the other two by pursuing the same tactics. Barbarian being beaten was a severe blow to the Irish division. The favourites never showed prominently in the race. Stockwell's subsequent career is too well known to require repetition. Neither of the three first ever did much afterwards.

1853 and 1854 (West Australian and Andover's years) call for no special comment.

The Derby of 1855 (Wild Dayrell's) will be long remembered by many for more reasons than one. In the first place, it was the smallest

field that came to the post during forty-nine years, twelve only starting for it. The attendance also of the "upper ten" was very small, owing to the Crimean war. I did not see it, being myself in the Crimea. I would not have mentioned this Derby only some wonderful stories have appeared lately in some of the Colonial papers regarding Wild Dayrell that are perfectly untrue—such as he was always galloped in the afternoon at three o'clock, the time the Derby was run, also that he was the biggest horse that ever won the Derby. Wild Dayrell belonged to Mr. Popham, of Littlecote, near Hungerford. While stopping there Mr. Popham gave me the history of the horse. On returning from the paddock where Wild Dayrell was I made the remark that he was a lucky man to win the Derby the first time of asking. He said, "You know I never bet, and my friends did not benefit much by the win. I was compelled to train him, as I could not sell him." He had been sold to one of the Duke of Richmond's sons, but he was returned, then sent up to Tattersall's with a reserve of 350 guineas. Not reaching that, he returned to Littlecote, and was placed in charge of Rickaby (an awful rogue), the stud groom (some stories say the gardener), to train on the private Downs. During the spring he showed so much improvement that it was decided to try if he had a chance for the Derby. Some friends lent the tackle, expecting to have a nice little *coup* for the Derby if he was good enough. The trial came off satisfactorily, and a commission sent into the market, when, to the astonishment of all concerned, it was found that they had been forestalled, and that the commission only averaged a short price. Some time afterwards it leaked out that Rickaby had arranged with some friends, who were posted on a distant hill, that if Wild Dayrell won his trial he should be turned one way, if he lost, the reverse way. Rickaby, the jockey who had his license suspended lately by the stewards of the Newmarket Jockey Club, is, I believe, a son of the above-mentioned man. Wild Dayrell was a fine horse, standing while at the stud a little under 16 hands 3 inches. He was rather straight on his fore-legs and tied at the back of the knee, which prevented him standing training long. As everyone knows, he proved a most valuable sire.

1886 (Ellington's year). There was a great deal of talk over this year's Derby, but with what truth I cannot tell. The rule was then brought in that jockeys should not weigh with their whips. The course was very heavy going. Ellington, who was trained by Tom Dawson and ridden by T. Aldcroft, who was well known to be in the hands of Harry Hargreaves and Jackson, won pretty easily, much to the surprise of most people, and the two were known to have won a big stake over him. Some thought that it was owing to Ellington's flat feet enabling him to get through the heavy going better than others. Many of the knowing ones, including Admiral Rous, concluded that he had carried short weight, this being done by changing whips. I have seen two whips exactly similar, the one being an ordinary one and the other weighing 7lb, the handle being loaded with quicksilver. However, the rule was soon after brought in that no jockey should weigh with his whip, so that there must at least have been suspicion.

(To be continued.)

To-morrow (Friday) at noon, Messrs. Digby Tonks and Co. will sell by auction at their mart, Queen-street, the booths, cards, stalls, and stabling rights for the Auckland Racing Club's first spring meeting, which takes place at Ellerslie, on Saturday, the 19th inst.

An exchange says there are some curious vagaries in the nomenclature of the turf, but Lord Alington has been specially happy in calling a filly foal by Ayrshire out of Cosy, Air Cushion. It is to be hoped, for his Lordship's sake, that the Air Cushion won't burst.

We are informed that the Auckland Trotting Club refused to accept the nomination of Mr. C. Philpot's pony Sepoy, on the ground that he had not paid the fine of £5 inflicted on him by that body, for betting on their course, without having first paid the license fee demanded by their rules. Mr. Philpot intends to have his pony out at Potter's at the proper time to be weighed out and measured, and if it is refused, he says he will sue for the stake.