

Extracts from
Mackay's Otago Almanac, 1864
Narrative of Events, 1863.

JANUARY.—New Year's Day was celebrated by the introduction of yearly games by the Caledonian Society, which were continued with great success during the two following days, on ground lent for the purpose by J. H. Harris, Esq., upon which a Grandstand was erected capable of holding a thousand spectators. Also, on the first of January was launched at Pelichet Bay, the s.s. "Lady of the Lake," since engaged in the Taieri and Waikouaiti trade.

MARCH.—The Champion Races took place from the 5th to the 8th, when the £1,000 prize, with sweepstakes of £100 each added, was gained by Mr. Redwood's (of Nelson) Lady Bird, which accomplished the distance of three miles in 5min. 55sec. Five horses started, including Mormon, the winner of the last Australian Champion Race.

The nomination for Superintendent took place on the 14th, when the show of hands was declared in favour of Mr. Harris. A poll was therefore demanded by Major Richardson, which was taken on the 9th of April, resulting in the return of Mr. Harris by a majority of 128 votes; the returns being—for Mr. Harris, 560; for Major Richardson, 432 ;—immediately after which the latter gentleman was presented with a flattering address and a purse containing £250, with which sum he founded a scholarship in the High School, Dunedin, declining to appropriate the present to his own personal use.

MAY.—The (Harbour) Peninsula Steam-boat Company was inaugurated this month—the capital to consist of £1,500, in 300 shares of £5 each.

The holiday in commemoration of the Queen's Birthday was embraced by the Town Board as a suitable occasion for the transfer of the lately-erected Bell Tower to the charge of the Fire Brigade as a watch-tower. A Regatta was also held on the same day at Port Chalmers.

Towards the end of the month, the Dunedin Gas Company commenced the public supply of gas. Though not at first largely patronized, the increased demand has been steady, and no doubt it will yet become a most prosperous Company.

On the evening of the 15th inst., about 10.30, occurred the smartest shock of earthquake ever experienced in this Province. Although no damage was done, eight or ten very distinct vibrations were felt.

At the first yearly meeting of the Otago Benevolent Society, held on the 19th inst. the receipts of the Institution for the year were reported at 1846 18s ^{inst.} and the expenditure at £649 19s 8d.

The Dunedin Scottish Volunteer Corps was formed this month, and promises to be more popular than the corps previously in existence, about 100 members having joined during the first two months of its formation.

The commemoration of the marriage of the Prince of Wales to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark, took place on the 30th inst., when the Provincial Government granted 1500 to be wholly devoted to the furnishing of a free dinner on that day to all and sundry. A bullock was also roasted entire at the Octagon, and distributed at noon. Several triumphal arches were erected in Princes-Street by public subscription; and the merchants and storekeepers showed their loyalty and well-wishes for their future Sovereign by decorations more or less costly, each vying with his neighbour in the attraction of his display. A procession, numbering several hundreds, was formed of the various public bodies (including the members of the Provincial Council), who marched to the Botanical Reserve, where the ceremony of the day was performed by his Honor the Superintendent, in the planting of two Royal Oaks in commemoration of the event. An address

of congratulation was then presented to his Honor for transmission to Her Majesty ; after which the procession, headed by his Honor, returned to the city to partake of the good cheer supplied freely to allcomers at the Provincial Sale-yards, which were suitably prepared for the occasion, and where many thousands dined during the afternoon—the Commercial Sale-yards and Dr. Burns' Church being reserved for the juvenile portion of the community.

A more enthusiastic celebration we never witnessed at home or abroad, and are convinced that the loyalty of the Dunedinites was not exceeded by any other city in Her Majesty's dominions on that auspicious occasion, when all joined in tokens of respect to their beloved Sovereign and the heir-apparent to the British Crown.

AUGUST.—Several agents were busy here this month in securing recruits for active service in Taranaki and Auckland, liberal grants of confiscated lands being promised' at the end of three years' service. Several hundreds were enrolled in town and upon the goldfields, and were at once conveyed to the scene of their future operations.

The High School was opened on the 3rd inst., when 57 scholars were enrolled, the installation ceremony being performed by His Honor the Superintendent, assisted by the Rev. Dr. Burns.

The new stern-paddle steamer "Tuapeka" left Dunedin for the navigation of the Molyneux on the 8th inst., and is likely to be the means of great improvement in opening up the resources of the fine districts bordering that noble river, for the navigation of which the "Tuapeka" is peculiarly suited, being built at Port Chalmers specially for that purpose.

The new hall, erected for the Young Men's Christian Association, in Stuart-Street, was opened by an inaugural soiree on the 12th inst. This useful society had, we think, unwisely been allowed to lapse for the previous twelve months, but has again resumed operations with renewed energy.

The seventeenth session of the Provincial Council was opened on the 12th inst., when Major Richardson was elected Speaker.

The legislation of the session consisted mainly in the consideration of certain proposed amendments in the land regulations introduced by Mr. Cargill, Provincial Secretary, whose proposal to raise the price of land to £2 per acre was defeated by a large majority. One or two new members being anxious to display their rhetorical powers and knowledge of every subject coming before the house, were, needlessly, the cause of much delay in the proceedings which were thus protracted over a period of two months to the hindrance of no less than seven members of the Council, also members of the General Assembly who were thus prevented from appearing in Auckland at the opening of the session, where, it is to be feared the amended land regulations after all the time spent upon them, will not become law.

On the 16th inst. a mutiny broke out among the prisoners in the Dunedin gaol, who refused to continue their work upon the Bell Hill. Stringent measures were adopted which speedily brought them to a more conciliatory spirit and the public works were shortly resumed by them as hitherto.

The Theatre Royal was opened on the 14th inst. by Mr. Geo. Coppin, but was again closed after a month's run as the experiment of two theatres in Dunedin was again found to fail.

The ship "Victory" arrived from Glasgow this month; but several cases of small-pox having occurred during the voyage she was put into quarantine and 250 of the passengers removed to Goat Island where they were detained for fully six weeks. The next Home ship, the "Mataura", had also to ride quarantine for one month.

SEPTEMBER—A dispute arose between the Provincial Government and the Union Bank, regarding the amount overdrawn on the Government account, which resulted in the transfer of the banking business of the province to the Bank of New Zealand.

Otago now forms an attraction to all the European celebrities visiting the Australian colonies. Already the Christy Minstrels have paid us a lengthened visit and are shortly to be

followed by the All England Eleven, Mr. and Mrs. Kean, Jeafferson, and other theatrical favourites.

OCTOBER—Sergeant Garvey—an active and much respected officer of the Otago mounted police force, who had fought the battles of his country in the Crimea—fell a victim to other than mortal foe, having met with his death in a snow storm while returning from a new rush in the Mount Ida gold field district.

From the shipping returns of our present issue it will be observed that the vessels now regularly trading between this port and Australia number 30, above 50 being also engaged in the coasting trade of the province, and a similar number of barges and punts in the lighterage trade of the harbour. The shipping returns also furnish another proof of the remarkable increase in the trade of Otago, which now exceeds the combined shipping of all the other provinces of New Zealand.

The public improvements introduced during the past year have been very numerous and extensive; but, judging from report, these are likely to be far exceeded by the proposed works of the coming year rapidly transforming Dunedin into a city which will soon compare not unfavourably with any city in the Southern Hemisphere.

The principal of the many buildings erected during 1863 have been as follows :—In Princes-Street, the Bank of New Zealand; Mr. Salomon, jeweller's shop—reminding one of such establishments in Cornhill; Messrs. Kirkpatrick and Co.'s new premises, forming in addition to his former building the most extensive drapery establishment in the colony; the extensive range in the Cutting just built by Mr. Farley, and the other buildings also erected there by Mr. Sibbald and others; Messrs. Sargood, King and Co.'s new warehouses; the extensive additions to the Provincial Hotel in Stafford-Street; Messrs. McLandress and Co.'s new store and saleroom in Manse-Street ; Messrs. Watson and Sons, Butterworth's, Kohn and Co.'s, and Cleave and Co.'s stores, the Custom House and the Australasian Bank in High-Street; Messrs. G. Wilson and Co.'s store, and the extensive stores being erected by Captain Williams in Maclaggan-Street; with the many new hotels, stores, etc., lately erected in George-Street, almost defying enumeration.

Several extensive Government buildings are now under consideration including, under one roof, a range of offices for the various public departments, a hall for the Provincial Council, and another for the House of Assembly, so as to attract that legislative body to hold at least an occasional session in this Province, which may yet become the capital of New Zealand, a position which it has already assumed commercially.

The undertaking—the greatest *par excellence*—of the coming year, will be the erection of a suitable building and other preparations for the Industrial Exhibition to be held in Dunedin on the 1st of January, 1865. A Royal Commission has been issued by the Governor, appointing Commissioners to conduct the undertaking, who have already agreed upon certain regulations, which have been forwarded to Europe and America for the guidance of contributors. The Provincial Council of Otago have voted 14,000 towards incidental expenses, and £9,500 for the erection of an Exhibition building, to be afterwards used as a Provincial Museum or other permanent institution. Local Commissioners have been appointed for the other Provinces, the expenses of which are to be borne by each severally. The General Assembly at its present sitting is expected to supplement the vote of the Otago Provincial Council in aid of the Exhibition funds ; so that the first Industrial Exhibition of the Southern Hemisphere is likely to be worthy the attention of the industrial world, and while it will foster and encourage arts and manufactures among ourselves, will also serve to bring the resources of New Zealand in general, and Otago in particular, more prominently before the notice of civilized nations.