

Sports and Pastimes.

TURF FIXTURES.

July 18 and 20—Wellington R.C. Winter August 14, 16 and 18—New Zealand Grand National Meeting

NOTES BY MONITOR.

The winter meeting of the Wellington Racing Club commences to-day (Wednesday) and will be continued on Friday. Given favourable weather the meeting promises to be more successful than any which have ever been held before, as the acceptances are large, including many visiting horses. From Auckland Dingo, Chevalier, Nor-west, St. Ursula, St. Peter and Straybird have been sent down, and they should play no small part in some of the more important events. Among local sportsmen who are visiting the capital are Messrs W. Percival, J. O. Evert, H. T. Gorrie, G. Coates, E. W. Allison, H. H. Hayr, R. Wynyard, R. L. Absolum, A. R. Harris, C. F. Mark, and W. Adams.

The first event to be decided to-day will be the Stewards' Handicap, in which I should not be surprised to find St. Peter playing a strong hand, although he may have trouble to dispose of Ruby Twist and Indian Shot. In the Winter Hurdles Plain Bill may win, with Chevalier as his nearest attendant. For the Parliamentary Handicap St. Ursula is not badly treated, although Ideal may be the one to trouble her most. Judged by his Gisborne running Straybird appears rather a good thing for the Maiden Steeplechase, in which most opposition may come from Cairo and Silver Ray. For the Steeplechase, which takes place on the second day, popular report points to Dingo as likely to provide the winner, but nothing will surprise me less than to find the top weight, Nor-west there or thereabouts at the finish.

The disappointing Wait-a-bit once more is being selected as likely to provide the winner of the Melbourne Cup, and his supporters would seem as sanguine as usual, judging by the large wagers taken about this aptly named son of Malua. Time after Time Wait-a-bit has been considered in the light of a good thing, but with about one solitary exception he has disappointed his admirers. I am with those who think that Wait-a-bit has seen his best day, and hardly look for a win from him, but should he do so it will be some recompense for the long series of disappointments which his followers have undergone.

A cable to hand states that the ex-Australian mare Maluma is favourite for the Liverpool Cup at 6 to 1 against. The speedy mare has placed several important wins to her owner's credit, and it will be pleasing to hear that she has once more proved superior to the opposition at Home.

When out at Ellerslie last Saturday morning I noticed several horses undergoing their daily work. Wright went Explosion three times round at a solid but, the big fellow moving in a very resolute style. The son of Cassius, who has been under a cloud of unsoundness for some time, seems to be fast pulling himself together again, and it is greatly to be hoped that this fine thoroughbred will stand a cup preparation so as to be able to fulfil his big Southern engagement in the spring. Another Cup candidate in Hengis was restricted to two solid rounds of the course, the son of St. Leger appeared to me to move a trifle sore after his work. The game little St. Paul is being worked again, and the little champion looks as though he is far from being done with, for since his retirement his legs have firmed down, and he bears a very lusty appearance all over.

The first Australasian Waterloo Cup won under the auspices of the Victorian and N.S.W. Coursing Association, fell to Mr Thomas Transit, which best Czarina. At the same meeting that successful N.S. Wales coursing, Mr Bindon, of Rooty Hill, won the Waterloo Purse with his dog Booty, which it will be remembered

recently won the Champion Stakes in Sydney.

The jumper Kanaka, who is in Ross's care at the Lake, already shows big signs of improvement, the beach work, and salt water no doubt having a great deal to do with it. The black horse is engaged at Christchurch next month, but I have not heard whether he will be sent down to fulfil them.

The big event of the winter meeting held by the V.R.C. at Flemington was decided last Saturday, this being the Grand National Steeplechase. Sixteen horses went to the post to do battle for the thousand pound prize, Mysore being a pronounced favourite at 9 to 2 against, while the next in request was Chelsea which started at 9 to 1. The latter, however, came to grief at the first fence in the straight, where Wallaby was in possession from Rosebud, Euro and Crusado. The ex-Auckland, however, fell when passing the sheds in the second round, at which point the favourite ran off. Wallaby maintained his lead until the straight was reached, when Rosebud came with a long run and won by four lengths in 6min 30secs, which is the fastest time for the race. The winner, who is by Quintin from Maistep, carried 9st, and was ridden by Jackson.

The most fancied candidates for the N.Z. Cup appear to be Record Reign, which is quoted at 10 to 1, Malua, which stands at 100 to 7, and Seahorse and St. Ilario, about whose chances 100 to 6 have been written.

The speedy Telephone, besides being able to win flat and hurdle races for his owner, comes in very handy in the winter months for a ladies' hack, and by his appearance makes a real good one at the game. I notice very often the chestnut gelding doing duty in this capacity in the Lake district. At present he bears a very healthy look, and no doubt this hacking about the roads keeps him in good trim at this period of the year.

It is a somewhat curious coincidence that both the winners for the V.R.C. Grand National Hurdle Race and Steeplechase should have been the greatest outsiders in each case. Both Aquarium and Rosebud started at the remunerative odds of 33 to 1 against, so that if at all backed the stables should come in for a good win. Both were, of course, among the very lightly weighted division.

One day during the week I dropped across that good little mare Miss Delaval on the Ellerslie Road. She is looking in rare trim at present, having furnished all over very considerably of late, and at first glimpse it was hard to recognise the daughter of Seaton Delaval, who has grown into a splendid mare. McManemini should have her cherry ripe by N.Z. Cup time, and if sent down to compete she is bound to make a bold bid for victory, for with 7.12 she will beat far more than beat her.

Old Voltigeur II, the hero of our last Great Northern Steeplechase, appears to have almost recovered from his recent lameness which befel him in the big event. The grey gelding is to be seen running out daily in a paddock at Lake Takapuna, and by the way he moved about the field one afternoon recently when the lads were after him to house him for the night quite convinced me that it would not be long before the son of Lionel would be ready for the fray again.

In America they establish some very fast records both on the flat and over sticks. Recently a mile and three quarter hurdle race was run in the exceedingly fast time of 1.11.8. It is not stated how many hurdles there were or what was their height.

Among the quotations put forth by the bookmakers I notice two New Zealand Cup candidates, viz., Volley and Rosiphel, figuring at the remunerative odds of 100 to 1. By the extreme long odds offered it would appear that these two lightly weighted equines possess a very small chance of scoring, although during the week some individual in the South was found willing to stake £15 on Volley's

chance, the wager written being 1500 to 15.

S. Loates still keeps his place at the head of the winning jockeys in the Old Country. Madderin has now passed M. Cannon and Rickaby, and holds second position with a score of 35 to the 41 of Loates. The brothers Reia now are a tie at 31, while the other jockeys who have reached a double figure total, are K. Cannon (19), Bigby (18), and J. H. Martin (16).

The well-known gentleman rider, Mr P. Neagle, who met with an accident while riding The Gryphon at the recent Gisborne meeting is making a good recovery from his injuries. The accident came at a very bad time, for he had engagements to fulfil at both the Wellington and Grand National meetings, and his mishap will have the effect of making him cancel these contracts.

Clack-m-Cuddin, one of Mr S. H. Gollan's latest importations from New Zealand, finished last in the Craven Stakes run on the opening day of the Epsom meeting. At the same gathering the disappointing Oban could only get third in the Epsom Plate, when entrusted with the confidence of his owner.

The Canterbury Jockey Club will give £10,100 in stakes at their Spring meeting, which is an increase of £2,625 on last year's amount. The meeting will be a four days' fixture, and will be held on the 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 10th of November.

The picture of Heather Spy which I promised to publish in this issue has been unavoidably held over till next week.

AUCKLAND COURSING CLUB.

The July meeting of the Auckland Coursing Club was commenced on Saturday last, and will be continued this afternoon (Wednesday). The two principal stakes were the Bracelet and Waitakeri Cup, which carry with them trophies presented respectively by Messrs H. H. Hayr and F. W. Coombes. As is customary at the Avondale Plumpton the hares ran magnificently, not a single one being pulled down during the whole afternoon. Some of the goes were exceptionally good, notably those in which Dragon beat The Gale and later on when he beat Highwater. Another close course was that between Picklock and Waltzer, in which the latter dog succumbed by a single point after running a no course. The Napier dog Rory O'More also had a gruelling go against Gobo, Jameson alone enabling him to win. Mr F. W. Coombes as usual acted as judge, his verdict in all cases being given very promptly. Mr J. O. Evert and Mr M. Foley acted as slip and flag steward, while Mr D. Brennan was in his accustomed position as slipper.

FOOTBALL.

The weather on Saturday morning did not appear promising for football, but before midday it cleared up and the afternoon was beautifully fine. It was generally anticipated that the result of the match between City and Grafton would go far towards deciding the championship, and consequently the attendance at the convincing ground at Potter's was a record for the season. The game evoked any amount of enthusiasm, the supporters of each team rolling up in strong force. The play was fairly even, City having much the better of the game in the first spell, when they had the advantage of the wind and sun behind them, whilst in the second spell Grafton had the upper hand but did not show such marked superiority as did their opponents in the first spell and suffered defeat by 11 points to 3.

On No. 2 ground Ponsonby met Suburbs, and the result of the game was a great surprise, Ponsonby being defeated by 6 points to 5, this being Suburbs' first win for the season.

At North Shore the local team were beaten by Newton after a close but rather uninteresting game, the

scores being 11 points to 6.

Saturday's results leaves city with the lead for the championship, and unless Newton can bring about their downfall next Saturday the premiership will be decided in their favour. On recent form Newton's chance does not appear very bright, but at football the unexpected so often happens that it is safer not to make a too decided prediction. Nevertheless should City play up to their form of last Saturday I fancy they will win.

CITY V. GRAFTON.

The spin of the coin favouring City they naturally elected to take advantage of the strong breeze that was blowing and to have the sun behind them. Right from the beginning they got on a strong attack and for some time gave Grafton a particularly lively time of it, and it was only first rate tackling that prevented a score on more than one occasion. A little later on some of the Grafton forwards got on a splendid rush and carried the ball right down the ground, but just when a score appeared imminent Brady tripped and fell over the ball and the opportunity was lost. City soon removed the play to Grafton's quarters and made desperate efforts to cross the line. Eventually their efforts were rewarded, the forwards badly beating the Grafton full-back, and rushing the ball over the line, Nicholson obtaining a try. Young was entrusted with the shot at goal, but the attempt failed, although the kick was not at all a difficult one. For the next ten minutes City held the upper hand and maintained an almost incessant attack on Grafton's line and eventually, despite the strong defence offered, Absolum succeeded in dashing over the line, and scored near the corner. The kick at goal was a failure, but the angle was a very difficult one. On the game resuming Grafton for the first time took a turn at attacking, and for some minutes they looked very like scoring, but a force was the only result. A minute or so later the black and whites had another chance; the ball was kicked over the line, and Sterling dived for it, but unfortunately for Grafton he overshot the mark and the ball was kicked to the dead ball line, and almost immediately afterwards the bell went.

With only 6 points scored against them, Grafton still looked to have a winning chance when ends were changed, but they seemed unable to take advantage of the more favourable conditions under which they were playing. It may be that their efforts in the first spell had taken a lot out of them, but certainly they did not do nearly so well as was anticipated. For the first few minutes of the second spell the ball was in Grafton territory, and on one occasion it was only Campbell's pace that averted a score, a force resulting. From the kick-out, however, the ball was taken to City's 25, but for some time all Grafton's efforts to score were futile. At length, however, from a scrum near City's line Kiernan whipped out the ball to Smith on the "silly" side, and the latter player dashed over the line and scored amidst great excitement amongst Grafton's supporters. The kick at goal, a very difficult one, was entrusted to Cuckey, who made a great effort, but the ball fell short. From this on Grafton had the better of the play, but their attack lacked "devil," and City's line was rarely in danger. Just on time the City forwards got on a magnificent rush from the half-way flag, and sweeping aside all opposition they carried the ball over the line, and Scott falling in it scored near the posts. Young converted and the bell went for time.

It cannot be said that there was anything of the fluke in City's victory, and everyone must admit that the better team won. Had, however, Grafton taken full advantage of the opportunities that offered City's margin would probably not have been so large.

To the City's forwards to a very large extent can be ascribed the victory of their team. Every man played well, and they showed superiority over their opponents in pretty well every department of the game. On the other hand, Grafton's forward play was disappointing, though, of course, it may be that they were overmatched. In the earlier matches of the season the black and white vanguard seemed more than able to hold their own with their opponents, but on the last two Saturdays they appeared to lack com-