

A new post and wire fence has been erected between the racecourse and Mr. Pascoe's properties at Ellerslie.

Bookmakers were offering 8 to 1 float and 10 to 1 Tapanui in the Stewards' Handicap at Taranaki, in which those horses finished first and second.

On Sunday J. Rae returned from New Plymouth with Mares, Strathavon, and The Needle. By the same boat the yearling colt by Sylvia Park, purchased by Mr. Hyland, was brought to Onewheunga. Despatches, who met with injuries on the first day of the Taranaki meeting, had to be left behind.

Okoari was not started at the Taranaki meeting. The daughter of St. Legor and Minkie Maid had not recovered sufficiently from injuries received at Takapuna to start in the Flying with much prospect of success with 10.2 on her back, as she had done no work in the interval. Full Cry was carrying 11.2 in the Flying, Full Cry was again, carrying 7.12. Okoari (9.13) not being paid up for.

The Dubbo trotting enthusiast, Mr. C. H. Fitzgerald, has returned from a trip to New Zealand to Australia, and informed "Martindale" that he saw the champion Ribbonwood, whom he describes as standing 15.2 in height, black in colour, and of compact, handsome build. He thinks Ribbonwood will give Fritz a battle for it in the coming match, but doubts if the colt can beat the Australian champion, standing 15.2 in height, black in colour, and of compact, handsome build.

The starting gates on the Taranaki Jockey Club's course were a bit of a fix up. Many persons present were under the impression that Mr. Chevallier allowed the horses to get too close to the cords, seeing that in three events during the week there was trouble, such as horses getting their heads into the barriers. In conversation with several of the riders, I learned that the barriers were very slow in moving, hence the trouble. One start, viz., that of the First Hack Race, was completely spoilt through the vagaries of the Soult gelding Sandy and the barrier combined.

The following item has local interest.—So far as the horses in Tasmania are concerned, it is very evident that Mr. Edgar Harris has in Chesterfield, by Chesterman from Irana, very fine, not the best in the island, says an Australian writer. At the Tasmanian Turf Club meeting Chesterfield won the Lancelotto Cup with 9.5, and was also first past the post in the Tasmanian "C. C. Handicap" with 10.5. In this, however, his rider had the misfortune to lose a leather and iron, and on coming to scale, he was a few ounces under weight, which was a bit of very bad luck. Chesterfield's dam, in the form of the C. C. Handicap, and is in the Cambria Park Stud.

The loss of their grandstand and other property by the Thames Jockey Club through the ravages of fire on Saturday afternoon is serious enough, though partially covered by insurance, but coming upon them as it has done, practically on the eve of their Autumn Meeting, is doubly unfortunate, as it is impossible to replace the stand in time for the meeting. Given fine weather, little inconvenience will be felt should a temporary structure be erected, and the committee will no doubt make every effort to provide for the accommodation of their patrons. When the nominations go in on Friday it is to be hoped that there will be a good response from horse owners.

At a recent pony race-meeting at Richmond (Melb.), says "Rider" in the "Bulletin," at the back-of-the-course punters, who could not raise enough to go inside, put their "trays" (8d) or "zacks" (6d) on their "dead-birds." They call this the "waxing." They have a runner who, "extreme" with a telescope through a convenient crack in the fence, tells the scratching men, etc. Among this motley crowd of men, women and children (all punters) was an ex-mayor of a city near Melbourne. Sydney can parallel this with "the hill" outside Randwick, and various points of

vantage overlooking other courses, where the "book" takes wagers on the least of penny postage-stamps and tram-tickets.

The victory of Queen's Guard over Mars in the Autumn Handicap at Taranaki was easily achieved, as the grey daughter of Vanguard had the measure of the son of Ingomar all down the straight, and did not even have to be ridden to beat him. A long ride, but not reports would lead those who did not see the race to assume that the finish was a hard fought one. Queen's Guard, who has won several times over a mile and a quarter, was handicapped against the Taranaki Cup, and Mars at 7.10. Neither started on the day. Mars was asked to meet the grey on siba worse terms next day over the shorter course, but while he ran a good race, the mare held him quite safe, as indicated by the result.

Australian Peer, who died the other week, says an Australian exchange, was a persistent opponent of the more famous Abercorn during their 3 and 4 year-old careers. They met over a dozen times, and Mr. James White's chestnut champion had the best of nothing the better of the rivalry. Whenever they met in a w.c.a. race one or other of them actually won, and in nearly every case the beaten battler finished second. Abercorn was first and the Peer came third, behind Nisarga, in the A.J.C. Derby, but in the V.I.C. Derby it was the Peer first, with Abercorn and Nisarga running a dead-heat for second. Abercorn took both the Legers. In their other contests up to two miles honours were easy, with nothing the better of the rivalry. Abercorn outlasted his rival on the turf, he never managed to capture one of the big handicaps.

Through some mistake there was a slight of hurdles short in the race won by Lady Bell on the opening day of the Taranaki meeting, and in addition to this, the lead-ers knocked the hurdles down, so that some of the horses had little jumping to do.

At Taranaki the hack racer Tikirawa, who is by Merrick England from a Coburne mare, was handicapped at 13lb and finished fourth, but more weight than he carried into fourth place in one of the hack races at Wellington, but did not compete in either, as he got cast in his box, the mishap occurring about two hours before the start of starting. Tikirawa has the reputation of being a good one on the track, was purchased last year for £19, and sold again to his present owner for £30. His dam is a well-known harness mare at Blenheim. One start, viz., that of the First Hack Race, was completely spoilt through the vagaries of the Soult gelding Sandy and the barrier combined.

"Prosperity has greatly increased the demand for good horses, and the supply is not equal to it," says "Harper's Weekly." "We are horse poor—not as some people are land poor, because they have too much land, but horse poor, because they have not enough horses. For years after the panic of 1893 thousands of people who wanted horses could not afford them. But with the return of prosperity the demand for good horses began to grow again, and breeders began to breed them again. But it takes at least five years to raise a horse that is ready for the market, and the breeders got behind. The demand has out-run the supply, and the price of good horses has increased very rapidly. There are about 13,500,000 horses in our land, of an estimated value of 604,000,000d. The improvement of that stock is a very important matter, especially in these days, when Europe is horse poor, too, and ready to take from us any surplus supply of good horses that we may have."

An exchange says that it is reported that a number of Sydney bookmakers intend to take advantage of the recent legal decisions which make it possible for bookmakers to ply their calling on New Zealand racecourses to make a descent upon the colony with book and pencil. There is not much chance of this. There are not many courses upon which bookmakers can assemble without permission of the clubs, and the Sydney bookmakers would find it a bit of a task and rather an expensive business trying to educate New Zealand

race-goers outside the Auckland province to take street-race prices so accounted as they are to totalisator odds. However, there are everywhere followers of the sport who prefer to take a straight out price about their fancy for a win, than to invest in the totalisator on the basis of uncertain odds, and take two chances of securing a return. The two dividend system should only be worked on races in which good fields are brought out. The heavy money-backers especially, don't see the two dividend business at all, and stand of the machine.

Mr. Justice Grantham, an English Judge, in summing up on a case recently, remarked that it was an interesting one from the fact that such a large proportion of the population indulged in horse-racing. There seemed no prospect that racing would ever be put down, and therefore it was more necessary that the members of the Jockey Club and the stewards of race meetings should be gentlemen beyond reproach. The position of the stewards approach to him to be of more importance than they realized, and nothing should be done to lower the position that they at present occupied, for they all knew that there was a great deal of rascally attendance upon horse-racing. They all regretted that they knew very few were good men for the character and conduct of the stewards this rascality would be much more rampant than it was at present. The position of the stewards was most difficult—it should almost be intolerable—and it was only by reason of their high integrity and character that racing was sanctioned as it was. They should be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion, and therefore they should not do anything which would be likely to lower their position.

That well-informed writer, "Warren Hill," in the "London Sporting Life," says: "We have had a figures and the successful bicks brought in by the totalisator, and the only point which I must still reckon on my own left out is that neglected theory of breeding to type. In all other animals, from the show rabbit up to the verge of the wicker chair, such as the hunter and steepchaser, type is the goal breeders seek to reach, and not until breeders of the racehorse pay more attention to this rule can they ever make any certainty of what sort of animal they are likely to get. Breeders to type are always a bit within a little, for the simple reason that their margin of extremes is never wide, and so long as breeders of racehorses persist in mating mares of one type with horses lacking in quality in common, and put little short-legged mares with long-bone-made horses, they need never expect the happy medium, with something resembling either sire or dam. Extreme opposite characters and types can never produce perfection and in proof of it do we not have hundreds of beautiful mares of various types utter failures at the stud, no matter how the fetters of the figure or any other system are cast about them."

Scene: A metropolitan racecourse. Time, 8.45 p.m. Locality, the Judge's box. Event, the Cup race. Handicapper to the judge (peering anxiously through his race glasses at the horses) "The country has been better. They are standing beautifully." The judge, who was looking in an opposite direction, and saw the horses being walked about some distance from the starting post, made no remark. "Why are you keeping me waiting that?" continued his brother official. The Judge: "Because they aren't ready yet." Handicapper: "What, not ready? Why, they've been in capital line for the last few minutes, looking to the judge to be for himself." The judge (talking in the affirmative): "Oh, yes, so they are. Don't they look nice?" The next moment came the cry, "They're off!" The handicapper, still gazing in the same direction, was astounded a few seconds later to see half a dozen horses galloping past the stationary mass of beauty he had been taking for the horses lined up at the post. It subsequently transpired that the young ladies attending the high school, on adjoining premises, had been permitted to have a look at the great Cup race, and had gone on to the course and seated themselves on some flights of hurdles, a little over two furlongs from the winning post, and looked on at the world a nice little Cup, Oaks, or should I say box, field. The handicapper, who had been

glancing in the wrong direction, was really confused from viewing the groups starting post in the position he had taken up, and had thus mistaken the school girls seated on hurdles for jockeys on horses, but then we all know strange things do come to pass on our racecourses.

One of the grounds upon which Payton, the Sydney trainer, based his appeal in favour of Eken Dhu at Canterbury Park, that Sauter got a flying start, draws attention to a very interesting case of an Australian writer, and one of which officials should take note. It has been remarked day after day that horses who are fractions off the mark invariably get a flying start, and as the start is everything over a short journey, none of the others have a fair chance. It seems an absurd thing that a trainer who has a horse that will not stand quietly should always be given a ten to one better chance than those trainers who take the pains to educate the horse to the barrier. Against this there is the argument that some of the owners, unable to face the machine quietly, but the answer to that is, the clubs should refuse their entry, as if it is found that a horse will not behave himself a little decently, the starter should not order him into the paddock. It is a common thing for these fractious brutes to be heavily backed, especially at the pony meetings, and as the boy on top has but one idea—and that to get away—there is a great deal in the term of suspension, do not act as deterrents. It sometimes happens that these fractious brutes when unbacked jump away and upset a good thing. As a rule, an owner has to be satisfied to being fairly beaten, but very annoying when his horse could win with anything like a fair start, to be robbed by these breakaway animals, whose trainers, so far as one is able to judge, make no attempt to educate them to the starting machine.

There is no branch of racing in the States better conducted than the pony and galloway meetings at Kensington, Ruelby Park, and Brighton, according to "Martindale," in the "Town and Country Journal." The "Town and Country Journal" at Kensington stand out ahead of the others. Last Wednesday's meeting was made memorable from the fact that the crack of the pony cracks, Minerva, at from Georgetown, scored with the Kensington Handicap with the crushing weight of 10.10 on her back. She went out second favourite in a field of ten, and won cleverly from the bottom weight, 10.10. Only once before has this performance been beaten in the way of weight over the Kensington track. The performer was the champion of her day—Cluder Ellen, who carried 10.12. Good as Minerva is, I don't think she is quite up to Cluder Ellen's standard. Afterwards, Cluder Ellen was sent to Luder, and is now in England. It is said that a purchaser was anxious to secure Minerva for South Africa; it has always been said that she is a bit infirm. When well, she is a rare good one. Amongst these ponies and galloways are some of the best bred out in the land, and very fast over short courses. What lift these pony and galloway meetings give to under-sized thoroughbred stock is shown by the fact that two of them—one a 13.2 and the other a 13.4—were sent to the other day, 5000s. There are not many of our horses running at registered meetings for which such a sum could be obtained.

It may sound like romance, but the story is one that I am assured is absolutely correct. A few years ago a horse owner and a handicapper who had been drinking together got to words. The treatment of a back engaged at one of the back-block meetings was the subject. The owner contended that his mare had won, and the handicapper contended that she had not. The argument ended in a rough and tumble which went in favour of the owner, who, in the moment of his triumph, declared that his mare was bound to win in spite of the result of the handicapper to stop her. She did win, too, and two stone more would probably not have stopped her. The narrator of this story says he once did a bit of handicapping himself, but back then he was not a member of the club, and the same handicapper had been appointed for both, but after the declaration of the weights for the first club's meeting some interested owners, who were prominent members of the club, had come to the conclusion that there must be a change at once. My informant very reluctantly was

THE A. & A. LINE. Fastest Line to Great Britain, and is recognized by the New Zealand public as possessing the largest Trans-Pacific Steamers (8,000 tons, twin screws, and classed A1 at British Lloyds). CARRYING FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD CLASS PASSENGERS. NEW ZEALAND TO ENGLAND 27 DAYS. 6 Days is the longest time at sea between ports. 17 Days completes the entire sea trip. YOSEMITE VALLEY, GRAND CANON OF COLORADO, YELLOWSTONE PARK make the Overland Trip one of delightful and constant variety. NIAGARA FALLS IS VIEWED FROM THE RAILWAY CARRIAGE WINDOW. A. & A. LINE ROUND-THE-WORLD PASSENGERS have choice of any line across the Atlantic, also of any line homeward via Suez or Cape routes. Fares: £16 to £130. HENDERSON & MACFARLANE, General Agents for New Zealand, Fort St., Auckland.

CANADIAN-AUSTRALIAN LINE OF ROYAL MAIL STEAMSHIPS. UNDER THE BRITISH FLAG. In connection with the CANADIAN-PACIFIC RAILWAY, The most substantially and perfectly-built Railway on the American Continent. TO LONDON THROUGH AMERICA, VIA SUVA (Fiji), HONOLULU, BAHIA, VICTORIA AND VANCOUVER. The Scenic Route through CANADA TO UNITED STATES AND EUROPE. Choice of Mail Services from Montreal, New York or other Ports. MOST INTERESTING SCENERY EVER VIEWED. ROUND THE WORLD TOURS AT LOWEST PRICES. EUROPE AND BAHIA THROUGH TRAVELLING SEVEN TRACKS. From Sydney: Brisbane, Feb. 23; Melbourne, Feb. 27; Perth, Feb. 27; M.O.S. M.O.S. And every Twenty-eight Days thereafter. Passengers from New Zealand have the option of joining the Mail Steamer at Sydney, or proceeding from Auckland to Suva and embarking there. FARES to Suva, Melbourne, Liverpool and London, £50 to £60. Round the World, £48 10s. to £141 10s. SPECIAL EXCURSIONS to Bahia, Rocky Mountains, in July, August, September. Return Fare from Auckland: £60 (including all expenses). For Information, Folders, Guide Books, etc., apply UNION STEAMSHIP CO. OF N.Z., LTD.