

"Though horse-racing" (writes "Cyclops" in the Mataura "Ensign") "is popularly regarded as the sport of kings, it must be confessed that so far as the colonies are concerned it is a pastime upon which fate and chance have the most contemptible, the most corrupt, and generally vicious specimens of humanity that could well be imagined." The writer goes on to say, with special reference to the recent Gore meeting, that such a hands-off, contemptible, and sharp as were present this year has probably never before been seen in Gore. He adds: "The whole gamut of criminality is compressed in the head which treks jauntily from race meeting to race meeting the whole year out—tolling not, nor spinning, yet extracting all that contributes to the comfort of life from a sport designed for the amusement of honest men, but debased by those perverts to the level amount of a mutual steal." "Cyclops" evidently sees more with his one eye than other people do with two.

J. Rae has in his hands about the oldest horse in training at headquarters in the Waikato Cup winner Mars; and his son Bert who is out in it, has been riding the old fellow in won for the best part of two seasons. Arthur, who is another son, is under 5st in weight, and has been riding The Needle in work all this season, and is certainly the youngest rider at Ellerslie and probably New Zealand, for he is only in his eleventh year. He was on the Needle in a mile and a quarter gallop on the 2nd of Tuesday morning, and his brother was on Mars, and they had the interesting go together. The Needle finishing a length to the good, the last round taking 1.55sec. Albert Percival has served three years' apprenticeship with Rae, and was about 6st 7lb when he started. His brother John has just joined the same stable on trial, and he scales very little over 5st, so that Rae is well off for light weights just now. There are quite a number of light-weights at Ellerslie. Victor Cotton, who has ridden in a good many races this season, being one of the youngest with a license.

Mr Webber, in his recently published book, "The Forests of Northern India," gives the following account of a fight he saw between two kyang (wild horses), which, "for ferocity and fury," says the writer, "surpassed any fight I have seen. Again and again the pair went at one another like tigers, biting, and kicking, and mauling, the blood flowing freely, while their tails and manes were terrifying. This he pursued for hours. Sometimes they would wrestle, locked together like prize-fighters; sometimes they would chase one another all round the valley, bounding across chasms and rocks, and then, when the pursuer, getting a little rest, took to the sheep paths on the face of the hill. The enemy pressed after him till he could neither go forward nor return back, watching them with the keenest eyes. At length he had to give up, and the victor, having triumphantly jumped from the point of a jutting rock into the abyss below, the other stood looking down, but failed to follow. Not an hour afterwards they were at it again with renewed fury. I shot on purpose to preserve the scene, making an example of the bigger bully who had 'fouked' the precipice. The smaller one had shown such pluck in coming to the scratch so often, and in making such an appalling jump, that he deserved forgiveness for his disorderly behaviour."

The Dodger, on the form he showed at Papakura, and on track achievements at Ellerslie, was sorted out by most racegoers as about the pick of those engaged in the Pony Race on the opening day of the R.C. meeting, but I noticed that Waiwha, by Sault from Leorua, who is a five-year-old gelding hailing from Taranaki, but who has not been raced for some time, and it is said has not been many weeks in training, has been put up for. Waiwha, in the hands of company down Taranaki way has been set to carry more weight amongst the big horses in most, if not in all, his engagements than he has in the Pony Race here, and will be doing it. Waiwha's performance has against him was carrying 9.2 and winning the Electric Handicap of 50sors, 5 furlongs, at Taranaki, on December 27th, 1901, defeating Waireka (7.4), Waresa (8.3), and (7.4). The horse of the name has since found her way to the top of the handicap lists in back events. Waireka has raced most consistently all through the season, and was only beaten a head in the Sirtford Cup, but she was able to run the five furlongs in 1.5, and there is no

reason to suppose that he has not improved. On paper, it and well, the Pony Race at Ellerslie would be a fair thing for Mr Elliott's little horse, who, by the way, is a race bred one.

The following appears in a recent issue of the American "Horseman": "The New Zealand Buffalo will be the most modern of any track in the United States. The stables will be supplied with all the latest improvements and inventions. One of the additions will be particularly acceptable to the layman, in that it will assist him materially to dawdle away a hot summer afternoon, with no further exertion than to lift a telephone ear trumpet to his ear, and communicate not only with his friends and relatives, but with his business concern, if he has one.

Each of the 80 boxes is to be provided with a telephone. There will be a telephone in the judges' stand, and the judges' private communication with all parts of the track, through the medium of the telephone.

A box-holder can lean back in his seat, pick up the phone, and get the (safe below): "Two gin rickys, please, with plenty of ice."

Or, if the judge's decision doesn't happen to suit him, he can be connected with the judge's stand, and have the pure pleasure of telling the presiding judge and stewards that he considers them as previous a lot of wicket heads as ever missed the horse next the rail, because they couldn't see over their noses.

Over the bar, the horses ate over, a nice light dinner for a hot summer night, can be ordered over the phone, so that it will be ready at club or hotel just as the race patron gets there, avoiding all unnecessary delay, and too frequent communication with cooling summer drinks, which have been known to spoil well-cooked summer dinners.

If the bookmaker has telephons he can sit in the box and ask "Teddy" or "Teddy," whoever it may be, to put 20 on Neverwin at the best odds.

There appear to be a great many interesting points in connection with this interesting feature of the race track, but somehow it seems to be a good deal of true—that is, speaking in behalf of the lazy man.

It would be very interesting to know how many track records have gone by the board this season in New Zealand. There is no doubt that our racecourses are being improved, and too frequent communication with cooling summer drinks, which have been known to spoil well-cooked summer dinners. It must be getting fatter as they go on and upon. Track records have been put up on several courses this season, which goes far in support of such a contention, rather than the other way round. Our horses are all so much better. When Advance won the Wellington Cup on the Hart Park course carrying the big weight of 10.4, and running the mile and a half in 2.34, nobody was so good as to have heard anything for the colonies as a time and also a weight-carrying performance from a barrier start. Mats put up a record for the course and the colonies at Wanganui in carrying up over 10 st in mile and three quarters, running the distance in 3.24. Mats, a gelding in his thirteenth year, he it remembered. Orloff, a three-year-old gelding, must have done better time than any three-year-old ever did in the country, as he was not more than half a length off, second. At the same meeting Machine Gun, a two-year-old, put up a track record for six furlongs of 1.34.35; but in order to do so he had to beat Advance, and was carrying 8.7, who got over the distance in 1.37. Westwood won in 1.35.15, and next day some horses, voted only ordinary hack racers, fought out a finish, the winner, Blackwing, getting to the end of the journey in 1.35.15—Newmarket Handicap time. Two races at a mile and a quarter were run in Wellington by Advance and Pallas respectively in record time. The Great Northern Derby was won by Wairiki easily in 2.27, which is a record for the race. The Dundee Cup was won by Orloff in 2.27, the record for the Wanganui track. Orloff's Canterbury Derby was a record achievement for the colony, his time being 2.27. Pallas put up a record go over five furlongs at Riccarton, with the wind behind him. Tradewind on Tuesday was equal to getting home in the record time for the better half track of 2.23.25 for five miles and a half.

The public often laugh, and pass a joke, upon the fact of a jockey's explanation being accepted as satisfactory by the

stewards. The public in these days (says Sydney "Town and Country") "in fact, at any time, are very hard to please. They are in the majority of instances prejudiced, and the fact that they have staked their money on the result, and lost. Jockeys, even the best of them, make mistakes in riding horses. There are cases in which bad judgment on the part of the rider has been taken by the public and others as an act of barefaced pulling on the part of the jockey. We are reminded of this by a recent event, which happened just over our southern border, at Whangarata. The stewards inquired into the case, and accepted the explanation of the driver, J. Hayatard, which was that he thought he had the race won. Steadying his horse, he found when it was too late that another was beating him, and when he called for further action they promptly failed to respond. Those who are in constant attendance at race meetings can tell not of one, but scores of races lost in a similar way. Very few of our crack jockeys but what are ready to hop along to them. Perhaps the late Tom Miles was one of the few who never lost a race after he had it won. That grand horseman was, however, the exception. The verdict of the Whangarata stewards, it is said, did not give satisfaction. Just so, but those who are dissatisfied with the finding had not the advantage of judging the case. They did not hear the evidence. We have known very shrewd racing men pass an opinion on a race, when they came to hear the jockey's explanation they were satisfied that they had formed a wrong impression. Racing stewards can never be too careful. They should never be too ready to listen to public clamour. Give everyone a fair and impartial hearing, and weigh the evidence well before passing judgment. Perhaps it would be all the more satisfactory if racecourse inquiries were open to the press. We see no reason why they should not be. The principal argument brought against such action is that the evidence at times would be libellous if published. That is a very poor excuse. The publishing of such would lay the newspaper people, who could safely be trusted to manage that part of the business all right. They would not for a moment forget that the evidence taken was not on oath. What we think on the matter is that it would be the means of making out race officials much more cautious. If they knew that the facts of the case were to be reported, much more care would be taken in getting the facts and hearing of the witnesses. Cases have occurred in our country race meetings which we know for certain were not heard in a proper manner by the stewards; in fact, one resulted in a gross miscarriage of justice to the man most interested.

A well-known Australian, Mr Sam Griffiths, writes thus to the Natal "Mercury" on racing in Natal:—Having had twenty years' active experience as owner, trainer, and sporting journalist, I offer a few remarks on the present state of racing in Natal in general, and Durban in particular, feeling sure I am only voicing public opinion. There is no disputing the fact that the sport has not lately been the success it should have done. There is a steady drift, which, if not checked, will seriously cripple racing in this colony. The causes which are producing this unsatisfactory state of affairs are so apparent that it is wonder is no determined effort has been made to remove them. Imprimis, there's the handicapping. 'Tis not for me, a comparative outsider, to say much on this subject, but it would be false to neglect to mention that widespread dissatisfaction exists, and at least one prominent owner has declared his intention to in future do the most of his racing on the Rand. Another serious drawback to the proper development of racing is the excessive amount and acceptance fees. Racing in a country like this should be popularized. At present only rich men can afford to race for sport. In Durban, unfortunately, wealthy sportsmen are not so numerous as could be wished. There are, doubtless, many good straight going sportsmen of moderate means—men who would be a decided acquisition to the list of owners, who are, by the present heavy cost of racing, precluded from owning a horse or pony of their own.

In conservative and wealthy England, the "little" owner is not wanted, and is not particularly well catered for, but the conditions are totally different in Natal, and more closely approximate to those obtaining in Australia and the United States, where are drawn from not only the wealthy House sportsmen, but also from Continental and American racing men, to say nothing of an African millionaire or two. In Durban we have to rely chiefly on business men, who, although the best of sportsmen, do not feel justified in expending large sums for racing purposes. In Melbourne and Sydney nominations and acceptance fees combined are fixed at a maximum of 5 per cent. of the value of the stake, but owners are seldom charged so much as that. Contrast these charges with the liabilities of Durban owners. For Saturday's February Handicap, of £400, it cost £4 to nominate, and £5 to accept. Now, I have no hesitation in declaring that if, at these "off" monthly meetings, the D.T.C. were to give £100 stakes, and make the nomination £1, and the acceptance £2, the public would get larger entries, and better racing. Indeed, the cost of racing, and there is certainly to be an increase of owners, and of horses and jockeys in training, which in turn will ensure larger numbers of the public. The D.T.C. has accomplished much, but there is more to be done. In course of time a step-by-step track could be laid out it could be done at little expense, for the Britishers and Colonials have nearly done "a bit of lopping." To put the matter in a nutshell, if racing is to keep pace with the times, it must be made popular, even though old traditions suffer. It is to be hoped, too, that better training facilities will be afforded in the near future. Instead of the course being thrown open only a week or so before each meeting, trainers should be able to use the track once or twice a week all the year round. I trust my remarks will be taken in the spirit in which they are offered.

As there has been so much litigation between the Wellington Racing Club and the public, there is more than local interest in the matter. The principal argument brought against such action is that the evidence at times would be libellous if published. That is a very poor excuse. The publishing of such would lay the newspaper people, who could safely be trusted to manage that part of the business all right. They would not for a moment forget that the evidence taken was not on oath. What we think on the matter is that it would be the means of making out race officials much more cautious. If they knew that the facts of the case were to be reported, much more care would be taken in getting the facts and hearing of the witnesses. Cases have occurred in our country race meetings which we know for certain were not heard in a proper manner by the stewards; in fact, one resulted in a gross miscarriage of justice to the man most interested.

The objection was raised to Mr Fitzherbert, Mr Pearce, and Mr Williams. The other trustee present was not original trustee, Mr Cuddy. In His Honor's opinion all three were properly appointed. As to the contention that Mr Wilkins was not properly appointed, because he was appointed to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Mr. Grace, who was not properly appointed, His Honor held that the authority quoted (the King v. Smith) was not in point. In that case the appointment was to a vacancy that did not exist; here there was a vacancy. The other two appointments were traced in detail by His Honor, and shown to have been validly made. The regulations were, therefore, in his opinion, validly made; (3) as to the license to use the grounds, it appeared (from the majority) were present—Messrs Fitzherbert, Cuddy and Edgington—and the question was: Is Mr Edgington a properly appointed trustee? He was appointed at a meeting at which Messrs Fitzherbert, Cuddy, and Williams—and was therefore a duly appointed trustee. The license was therefore valid. A point was raised that even if the trustees had been improperly appointed, still, as they acted de facto and not jure their acts would be valid. In certain cases officers who so acted may do valid acts, but in His Honor's opinion

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