

GOLF NOTES.

The Auckland Golf Club's matches were begun on Saturday at Cornwall Park. The course was under the usual 18 holes, and about 20 competitors started to beat Colonel Buggy. The best return was that of J. R. Hooper, who came in from scratch with a score of two down. Another competitor returned a card with the score of three down written on it, and although on checking it, it was found that the true score was 2 down, the written score had to remain as sent in, in accordance with the rules. Other scores were:—Dr. T. Hope Lewis (3 strokes), 3 down; H. T. Turner (3 strokes), 3 down; H. T. Gilchrist (3 strokes), 2 down; A. Ford (3 strokes), 1 stroke; J. Down, 2 down; G. Pollen (3 strokes), 1 down; J. McWilliam (3 strokes), 7 down; H. Gilchrist (3 strokes), 8 down; W. R. Colbeck (3 strokes), 0 down; W. N. Hooper (11 strokes), 0 down; A. Piddell (15 strokes), 10 down; W. W. Hooper (15 strokes), 11 down; J. E. Hetherford (15 strokes), 12 down; W. Brown (14 strokes), 12 down. Several cards were not returned.

Frank T. Bullen.

The author of that fascinating sea story, "The Cruise of the Cachalot," forms the subject of an article in "M.A.P." Nearly forty years ago he was a street arab earning his living—Heaven save the mark!—by holding horses, selling newspapers, what you like, and sleeping oftener than not with little but the velvet pall of night to cover him. A few weeks since he was the guest of the evening at the Authors' Club. A fine achievement, this jump from waif to novelist, had authorship been his aim all along, but an absolutely marvellous one when one considers that no thought of writing entered his head till within the last decade, and when one learns the story of his previous life. For the first nine years of his life he was a happy child, lovingly cared for by his aunt, a poor dressmaker. If many years were to pass before the literary seed in him was to germinate and fructify it was early implanted. His aunt possessed a few books, among them "Paradise Lost," and before the child was five years old he had read Milton's great poem twice through, "arguments" and all. This was the first manifestation of an abiding passion for reading, and one can trace the Miltonic influence in Mr Bullen's descriptive passages—gorgeous in word-painting, grand in conception, and breathing a spirit of the deepest piety. Scarcely had he acquired the three "R's" than his sun sank beneath the horizon with tropical suddenness—no doubt, he thought for ever. He fell into the clutches of a step-mother, more stony-hearted than Oxford-street, and in his own words there came in place of love, education, and sympathy, "hunger, blows, and severe, exhausting labour from six in the morning till eleven at night, and an atmosphere of vile language." Remember that he was a very little boy for his years. He escaped from this horrible travesty of a home, became, as already mentioned, a street arab, and then took to the sea, for long hampered in obtaining berths by his tiny size. Of his perils, hardships, and Ulysses-like wanderings as a sailor one need not speak here; the story has been told as none else could tell it in his books. As strength came to him he was perilously near developing into a thorough-paced black-guard, but an early "conversion," as he terms it, and, by whatever name we designate it, a wonderful turning point in his career occurring in Port Chalmers, N.Z., brought him up with a round turn. He married "oh nothing," as he puts it, at twenty-one, and rose as high as mate, but he had not sufficient money to pay the fees for master's examination, which colloquially speaking, he could have passed "on his head." 1882 found him on "shore out of work, penniless, and with a wife and child to support. If the baby was plump, the parents were well-nigh starving, when he obtained a post as computer (a sort of junior clerk) in the Meteorological Office, and thought himself a Rothschild. But as the years rolled by his quiver filled, and his salary of £2 a week seemed less princely than at the first flush. Little mouths wanted food, little feet required to be shod, and he was at his wife's end how to supplement his income. For a long time it never occurred to him to write—it too seldom does to the men who have seen life without the varnish—but the fore-ordained came to pass, and he commenced writing. In three years he made under £40, and felt himself a ghastly failure. Then he sent an article to the "Cornhill," which was printed, and Mr St. Leo Strachey became his literary father; but it was not until the "Cruise of the Cachalot" was published in 1899 that he emerged from the gloomy world of poverty on to the smiling, sunlit plain of success. The unknown drudge of the Meteorological Office suddenly found himself the object of the outspoken admiration of men like Kipling and the most famous critics of the day. But he had little heart to enjoy his laurels, for with him was the gnawing memory of the beloved boy—his youngest child—who had died on the very day that "Cachalot" was accepted by Messrs Smith, Elder and Co. Since then he has steadily advanced with "Idylls of the Sea," which someone wittily called "The Loves of the Whales," "The Log of a Sea Waif," "With Christ at Sea," and a series of other books, down to his latest, "A Whalerman's Wife," too long to con-

ment upon here. Let us see how he looks in the plenitude of his success. Long years of bitterness, suffering, and privation have not failed to leave their imprint. He can be as jolly as a sandboy, but in repose his face is very sad and careworn. Physically, he is a man of inconsiderable build, though I should be sorry for the hoodlum who "took him on," with black hair and beard, heavily shot with grey, a prominent nose, and particularly fine keen brown eyes. On the whole, a trifle Semitic-looking, though he comes of Dorset stock. From the above, there is obviously no physical resemblance between him and the red, torpedo-bearded truculent little ruffian of Mr Cutcliffe Hlyne's romances. Yet there is a certain mental affinity. Mr Bullen lacks Captain Kettle's ferocity and panellio, but, like him, he is a "man of his hands," has the same strong vein of religious feeling—if he does not proselytise with a six-shooter—and the same taste for weird music. Captain Kettle found solace, if his audience did not, in the concertina, and a concertina and a gramophone are amongst Mr Bullen's playthings. One may add that at one time he was a strenuous open-air preacher. Accustomed from early youth to severe toil, he gets through a wonderful amount of work. Five thousand words in a day, written in an exquisitely neat and legible hand—for he has always taken a physical joy in the mere act of writing—is nothing to him, and for the last three years he has been very busy lecturing, with great success. He is only forty-six, so, although he has achieved much in a short time, who shall say what he may yet do in the future?

The Balkan Crisis.

A FEW NOTES ABOUT THE COUNTRY.

Albania forms the south-western portion of the remaining immediate possessions of European Turkey, and extends from the principality of Montenegro on the north to the river Arta, which separates it from Greece on the south. The Albanian land is remarkably fertile—but through bad rule and the indolent and irresponsible character of the people, this fact is a negligible, or at least a neglected, quantity. The Albanians themselves form a peculiar people called by the Turks, Arnauts, and by themselves Skiptars. Their language in the view of Lord Strangford, "is more closely connected with Greek than with any other Indo-European language existing or recorded." The Albanians are "half civilized mountaineers, frank to a friend, vindictive to an enemy. They are frequently under arms, and are more devoted to robbery than to cattle-rearing and agriculture. They live in perpetual anarchy, every village being at war with its neighbour, and even the several quarters of the same town carrying on mutual hostilities." Many of them serve as mercenaries in other countries, and hitherto they have formed the best soldiers in the Turkish army. At one time the Albanians were all Christians; but after the death of their last chief, the hero Scanderberg, in 1467, and their subjugation by the Turks, a large part became Mohammedans, who distinguished themselves thenceforward by their cruelty and treachery. Their rebellions against Turkish rule have been numerous, but not generally very formidable. The Russian occupation of Bulgaria was discussed as a possible event of the current year long before the Balkan situation had reached its present degree of an acute crisis. The ideal of the occupation of the peninsula with a view to a Mediterranean "frontage" is, of course, as old as Peter the Great. Montenegro, the little Principality which the Czar has recently been arming, has the distinction of possessing a capital in Cetinji (or Cetigne, as it is sometimes written) with a population of some one thousand people. Turkey may be said now to be beset by enemies on every side—Serbians, Bulgarians, and Montenegrans to the north and north-east, Albanians to the west, Macedonians to the south, while on the east there is nothing more friendly than the Aegean Sea. It must not be supposed that because Russia and Austria are acting in con-

cert that their interests are ultimately in common. The main feature of the Near Eastern policy of both Germany and Austria has been to prevent the westerly encroachment of Russia. They may be said to be the only two nations in a formal and exact sense directly interested in the maintenance of the status quo on the peninsula. With the other powers the governing principle is a very general and indirectly involved but a highly important one in the maintenance of the "balance of power." Italy is, however, interested in the fate of Albania, for obvious reasons.

Turks, Greeks, and Albanians form 70 per cent. of the population of European Turkey.

Mitrovitza—a town in Albania about which we are hearing much just now—came into prominence last year by the expulsion therefrom by the Albanians on September 3 of two servants of the Russian Consulate. Subsequently the people of the town and the surrounding districts were disarmed by the military authorities, and the situation greatly improved.

The Macedonian share in this general revolt is the culminating point of prolonged and careful organisation with the object of obtaining radical reforms. The Macedonian Committee which was recently broken up by the Bulgarian Government through the influence of Russia has been a powerful agent in favour of revolt. The main demand of this Southern people is for the introduction into Macedonia and the vilayet of Adrianople of reforms analogous to those given to Crete. This demand was after the massacres of November last supported by Russia and Austria-Hungary, and later by Germany.

The Turkish Army is organized on the territorial system, the whole empire being divided into seven territorial districts. By the recruiting law all Mussulmans are liable to military service. Christians and certain sects pay an exemption tax. The cavalry are set down at 53,300; the artillery (174 field and 22 mountain batteries) at 54,720 with 1,356 guns; the engineers at 7,400; and the infantry at 583,200. Servia's total military strength is estimated at 128,000, with only 16,000 to 18,000 with the colours; while Bulgarian claims to have an army of 130,000 men of all ranks.

The Burglary Epidemic in Auckland.

A series of burglaries in the Auckland district has been reported during the past week, and the disconcerting epidemic of crime has not concluded, so it behoves residents to be exceedingly careful in "locking up," and to place portable valuables safely out of the reach of midnight visitors. The latest report of a burglary comes from Northcote, the circumstances proving that it must have been committed by a daring "old hand." Even yachts in the harbour have not been overlooked, a number of thefts from them having been reported.

The burglary at Northcote occurred at Captain Slattery's residence on Sunday night. The captain had drawn his pension last week, and he might have been expected to have a tempting sum of money in the house, but fortunately he paid a number of accounts in Auckland, and when he retired on Sunday evening there was between £10 and £12 in gold and notes in the cash box, which was kept in a chest of drawers in his bedroom. Mrs. Slattery got up at four o'clock on Monday morning, and saw the drawer open. This caused her to examine it closely, and she was startled to find that the cash box had disappeared. The house was examined for traces of intruders, and the front room window was found open. It had been closed, but not fastened, on the previous evening. There were ten persons sleeping in the house, and the thief, or thieves, must have possessed considerable nerve to enter Captain Slattery's bedroom, seeing that two or three other bedrooms had to be passed before it could be reached. Nothing was stolen excepting the cashbox, with its contents. This is not the first robbery at Captain Slattery's house, one of the young men staying with him having lost a small sum of money a few weeks ago.

COURSING.

THE WATERLOO CUP.

LONDON, February 28.

For the fourth year in succession the Waterloo Cup "The Deity of the Leash" has gone to the famous kennels of Messrs Fawcett's of Long Hall, Cheshire, their second string dog, Father Fillet, a brindled son of Fleyr Furnace and Nanny Faithful, proving too good for his kennel companion Farndon Perry, last year's winner, and favourite for this year's event, in the semifinal round, and winning easily from Mr Pilkington's puppy Paracelsus, in a 20-second final course. The luck of the Messrs Fawcett in this great event has been curious. For years, although enjoying all before them at other meetings, they were unable to secure the chief object of every coursing man's ambition, and it was not until last that Fabulous Fortune placed the great event of the year to their credit. Then came three more successful years, but since then they have completely monopolised the Cup, with Fearless Footstomper (twice), Farndon Perry, and Father Fillet. This makes five victories in eight years, a truly wonderful record. Mr Pilkington's best success dates as far back as 1888, when Burnaby won for him, but his only other victory since has been gained with that grand bitch, Flourence Beauty, the daughter of Paracelsus, and many other good ones. In the first and second rounds nearly all the fancied dogs went down, including Mr Pilkington's Prince Charming, a much-fancied candidate for the coveted honors, and throughout the contest the lovers of odds had a very bad time of it. In the semifinal they came as underdogs, however, in battling 5 to 2 on Paracelsus against Handsome Cecile, the puppy in a long scratch to a good hope and who by the late added neck shot kept evenly in touch and scored the next two points. Then in attempting to prevent pass breaking back again, he sprang over some ridgy ground and let up Handsome Cecile. Recovering quickly, the puppy moved up again, and when, after a couple of exchanges, both dogs fell on the bare for the kill, Paracelsus was a handsome winner.

When Farndon Perry and Father Fillet went to the start the latter held on best for a while, but the handicapper tared out a good two lengths for the turn, and as the hare broke back came round in close possession. He used his bare twice, and then declining to kill at once, leaving his rival unhurt.

For the border, Father Fillet was favourite, at 11 to 4 on. The pair were sent after a first rate hare of level terms, and the favourite gained a second of length and time on the hare, and the puppy moved up again, and when, after a couple of exchanges, both dogs fell on the bare for the kill, Paracelsus was a handsome winner.

The Waterloo Horse for the 32 dogs beaten in the first round at St. George's was a grey, and the dog, compiled for by the sixteen dogs beaten in the second round, was guided by Lady Star and Malloy.

On the whole the meeting was carried out under perfect conditions as to weather, and the hare at "Alec" proved to be a very nice lot, and in consequence whilst some courses left the dogs fairly "baked," other animals got through their work in 18 or 20 seconds.

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