

Biggest Derby Sweep in the World.

FACTS ABOUT CALCUTTA PRIZES.

The general popularity of the Derby "sweep" is undoubtedly one of the most interesting features of that classical event of the Turf. In almost every British factory, shop, and office "sweeps" are organised, employees placing their threepences, sixpences, and shillings in the pool in the hope of drawing a favourite and winning a pound or two, while in a much larger scale—the entrance fees ranging from 10s to £5—"sweeps" are carried on at the big political, sporting and social clubs, and such places as the Stock Exchange and Lloyd's, the prizes in many cases running into hundreds of pounds. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that millions of people, the majority of whom would probably strangely object to gambling and all its evils, take part in Derby "sweeps" every year.

The biggest Derby "sweep," however, was conducted at Calcutta, Johannesburg, and Melbourne. White, however, in the case of the last two the first prizes usually reach about £20,000, that of the Calcutta "sweep" generally totals up to over £50,000. And it is possible for this sum to be won by an outlay of about 18/6 (ten rupees). Something like half a million tickets are sold annually, and the method is adopted of giving 40 per cent of the total receipts to the drawer of the winner of the race; 20 per cent to the drawer of the second horse; and 10 per cent to the drawer of the third; the remaining 30 per cent, less 10 per cent for expenses, being divided among those lucky enough to have drawn a starter in the race, and those who have drawn a non-runner entered for the race. As a matter of fact, subscribers who even draw horses which do not start for some reason or another may profit to the extent of something like £60.

World-wide interest is aroused by this "sweep," and tickets are applied for from all parts of the world. It should be pointed out, for the benefit of those who would like to participate in this gigantic "sweep," however, that tickets are only issued to members of the Calcutta Turf Club, and one can only obtain a ticket through a member of the club; but there is no limit to the number of tickets a member may get.

This gigantic "sweep" originated some years ago, when Lord William Berosford was military secretary to the Viceroy of India. He conceived the idea of organising a Derby "sweep" at the Calcutta Turf Club, and in order to increase the value of the prizes, the "sweeps" was advertised among all Anglo-Indians—adventurers, soldiers, merchants, and planters. The result was that it quickly assumed gigantic proportions, and has grown enormously within the last decade. Ten years ago the first prize was rather over £20,000; this year it is estimated that, like last year, it will be over £60,000, the winning of which, of course, makes one practically independent for life; for even at 2s per cent such a sum would yield an annual income of £1,500.

It is not often, however, that one person wins the whole of the first prize, for the simple reason that when it is known who has drawn a horse, syndicates formed in India of officers and civilians approach the lucky drawers and offer to purchase their ticket, or a part of their ticket, for a certain sum.

For instance, the winner of the first prize in 1910, Dr. Bolton, the emigration agent for Trinidad, resident in Calcutta, who drew Sumstar, accepted an offer of £12,000 for a half-share in his ticket. The prize prize amounting to £60,000, he thus won altogether £42,000; while Mr. Aubrey, the workhouse master of Warrington, who drew Stedfast, the horse which came in second, disposed of a half-share in his ticket to a syndicate for £1,200. His prize came to £24,000, so that, after handing over the half-share, less the purchase money, Mr. Aubrey netted £18,200 for an outlay of a few pence over £2, having purchased three tickets.

Then, again, £32,000 of the first prize in the Calcutta "sweep" was won in 1910 on an outlay of less than £1 by Captain H. T. Raban, of the Indian Army. When the captain heard that he had drawn Leamberg he sold half his ticket for £7,000, retaining his right to the other half of the prize, which was worth £50,000. Again, another lucky subscriber who drew the late King Edward's horse, Minoru, in 1909, disposed of a share in his ticket for the

substantial sum of £6,000. Had he retained the whole interest, he would, of course, have done a great deal better, but as it was he received altogether £20,000, enough to enable him to live in luxury for the remainder of his days. That these syndicates who buy up the tickets, or part tickets, of lucky drawers find the business a very profitable one is evident from the fact that on the 1910 Derby it is estimated that they made a profit of £24,000; for, of course, there are many subscribers who, although they draw one of the favourites, think it is better to make sure of £5,000 or £6,000 offered to them by a syndicate, rather than take their chance of their horse being beaten and drawing a much less sum.

The manner in which the draw is conducted is quite simple and scrupulously fair. It is made on the Saturday preceding the Wednesday on which the race is run. The numbers of all the tickets sold are placed in one revolving barrel, while in another are placed the names of all the horses originally nominated and entered for the race. Then a blindfolded boy draws a number from one barrel, and another blindfolded boy the name of a horse from the other. After each draw the barrels are revolved, giving all the numbers and horses a shake up. Those people drawing starting horses are immediately notified by wire, no matter to what part of the world they may have gone.

Incidentally, it might be mentioned that there are unscrupulous persons who send out tickets very much like those of the Calcutta "sweep" in order to defraud, so that great caution should be exercised by people who desire to enter for the great sweepstake, the official title of which is the "Calcutta Turf Club Derby Sweep."

It is scarcely necessary to mention, perhaps, that there are some curious and romantic stories connected with the winning of the world's greatest "sweep." One year a prize of £30,000 was won by the six-year-old daughter of a native signalman on an Indian railway, and the family was instantly lifted into prosperity.

Another year a valet at a West-End club drew a winner. He sold half his ticket for £6,000, and retired on the proceeds. On another occasion a young clerk in Calcutta, with a modest salary, was working overtime to make a home for his sweetheart. She was a dressmaker, and the clerk gave her as a present a ticket in the "sweep." It won the first prize, but, alas and alack! the fickle maiden, now an heiress, threw over the clerk, and sailed for England, where she married another man.

Perhaps one of the most amusing stories connected with these Derby "sweeps," however, is that of a burxom Australian widow, who speculated in a ticket in the Melbourne "sweep" with money saved from her work as washerwoman. She was reported to have won the first prize, and had a dozen proposals in almost as many minutes. Finally she was dragged off to a parson and made a bride by a storekeeper within an hour. But, to the great chagrin of the enterprising bridegroom, it appeared next day that it was another woman of the same name who held the winning horse, and not his wife. The stationmaster had received a message and had quickly circulated the news, but mixed up the two women.

Speed v. Stamina.

SUCCESSFUL RACING MAN TALKS.

Mr. E. Hulton, who was high in the list of winning owners on the flat during the late racing season in England, and for whom Mr. R. Wootton trains, gave listeners the benefit of his experience and opinions on various matters connected with racing while making the principal speech at the 14th annual dinner of the York Gimcrack Club a few weeks ago. Mr. Hulton was the principal speaker by season of his horse Flippant having won the Gimcrack Stakes at the York August meeting. He is a newspaper owner in a large way, maintains about 25 horses in training during the season, and therefore should know his subject.

Mr. Hulton, in making reference to the growing disfavour of long distance handicaps, said that he believed long races were watched by the public with more interest than any, but owners and trainers of horses did not favour them because they found more scope in going for shorter races and less risk of breaking horses down. It is much the same in England as with us, for valuable

prizes in longer races do not necessarily produce a better entry either in number or in class. "Perhaps," said the speaker, "if a series of long distance handicaps of fair value were arranged by concerted action amongst the race companies better results would follow."

Mr. Hulton does not subscribe to the belief that the falling popularity of long distance racing points to the decadence of the present-day racehorse. Like many other students of racing, he was inclined to think that there is a great deal of misconception as to what really took place in those early days when horses ran long distances. It will be found on investigation that very few horses ran more than once in one day; that, although the events were over long distances, the pace was bad, and, in fact, there was more dawdling about than running, except at the finish." Calling further upon records, Mr. Hulton remarked that from a glance back at 1812 and later, it could be seen that there was a gradual tendency to cut the distance and increase the pace. The heats do not appear to have been timed, and, in the speaker's opinion, pace was the deciding factor as to the merit of endurance, and that led him to claim that the races of those times are far more strenuous and exacting than the old heats. He had no doubt that those old-time conditions would cut a poor figure now.

Believing that the real test of merit in a racehorse is the fast mile, but to which many people are likely to take exception, Mr. Hulton said that "the horse which can succeed at that distance amongst the best class and in the best time is the horse that is wanted. The fast mile is the horse to breed from. As long as this type is produced—and it is being produced—there is no fear of decadence." Passing on to racing from the breeder's point of view, the speaker tackled the question of speed as a factor in breeding racehorses. He ventured the opinion, without any reservation, that "the best stallions have proved their speed at about one mile. They never have subsequently shown they could stay longer distances as well. But no great stallion has lacked speed. It is the essential. Even though they have won the best long distance races, pure stayers—horses of one pace, but without speed—have never been successful stallions." In support of this contention, Mr. Hulton said, "How few Cesarewitch horses have succeeded as sires! On the contrary, in the Cambridgeshire—a very fast run mile—many winners have subsequently become successful at the stud. The winners of the Ascot Gold Cup may be divided into two divisions, the first consisting of very high-class horses, many the best of their year, who had already proved their speed, such as Cylene, Formosum, Longlegs, St. Simon, Isomy, Petzarch, Doncaster, Scottish Chief, and Thornbury. All these were great stallions. The second division might be called the handicap class, with whom mere staying was a far greater characteristic than speed."

Mr. Hulton contended that it would speak very poorly for the intelligence of racehorse breeders if the same progress had not taken place in the racehorse of late years as in running, walking, swimming, and jumping. Since 1846, when the first time was recorded, 15sec. have been knocked off the Derby time, and the Derby is run 10sec. faster than it was 30 years ago, figures which were accepted as endorsing the speaker's contention.

Among other subjects touched upon by Mr. Hulton was that oft-discussed rule under which entries are cancelled by the death of the nominator. In stating that an alteration is desirable, the speaker suggested that the legatee should have the option "to declare, within a definite period, whether he will take the engagements or not. Of course, he would have to take all the engagements or none. He would also have to satisfy the stakeholder of his bona fides, and, if necessary, he might be called upon to pay in advance." In pressing his argument right home, and the loss to racecourse executives of subscriptions, and of interest in their races, through entries of good

horses being cancelled by death, Mr. Hulton said: "Look, for instance, at next year's Derby. The two horses that would most readily occur to the mind in connection with it would be Craganour and Shogun. Neither of these horses is nominated by its present owner, and through an untoward circumstance neither animal might be able to start. There would be intense disappointment to their owners; the value of the horses would be tremendously decreased, and the public would be disappointed in seeing, possibly, the best horses cut out of the best events of the season."

How Animals Speak.

After spending several years in the Sierra Nevada Mountains studying the habits of birds and animals, Mr. Charles Kellogg, the well-known American naturalist, has returned to civilisation, claiming that he has mastered the hidden languages by which the lower animals communicate with each other; and at the present time his claims are being closely investigated by leading American scientists and professors.

Mr. Kellogg contends that wherever animals associate freely they communicate with each other, though animals of the same species have a more clear and perfect understanding than those of different species; and it is by years of constant observation of the sounds by which animals communicate with one another that Mr. Kellogg claims to have mastered no fewer than fifteen animal and bird languages, ranging from the language of a chicken to that of a bear or a rattlesnake.

In his opinion the most highly developed language of any kind of animal, bird, or insect is that of the ordinary earth cricket, while he has reason to suspect that monkeys are superior, too, in this respect. According to a dictionary which he has compiled, there are twenty-seven elementary words or sounds in the language of a monkey, while the number of words or sounds in the languages of other animals varies from twelve to twenty-five.

"Strangely enough," he says, "the dog, which we are accustomed to regard as of a rather high order of intelligence, is markedly deficient in the matter of language, both the grizzly bear and the rattlesnake being vastly his superior. In the vocabulary of the ordinary watchdog there are but seventeen sounds. I know one dog, an exceptionally intelligent collie, who regularly used twenty-one sounds in ordinary conversation."

"This lack of linguistic development on the part of dogs proceeds, I believe, not from any lack of intelligence, but rather from lack of means of expression. To a far greater extent than any other animal of my acquaintance dogs depend upon their intuition, a faculty which is developed in them to a remarkable degree. They seem almost to read each other's minds without any exchange of signals whatever."

MELLOR'S SAUCE

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