

RACING REVIEWED.

[By BORDERER.]

The opening chapter of the Takapuna Jockey Club's Winter Meeting was a great success; and the attendance and favourable surroundings of last Saturday's gathering augur well for the prospects of the Queen's Birthday meeting. The events were well run off to time, and in no respect could the management of the meeting be called into question or unfavourably criticised. Every detail was carefully supervised, and Mr Robert Wynyard, the secretary of the club, may be congratulated upon the smoothness which characterised the meeting. The good effect produced spoke well for the way in which he had fulfilled the many duties which fell to his lot as secretary. The weather was all that could be desired, but there is little doubt that the one or two slight showers which fell in the morning unfavourably affected the gate. Given a fine day on the 24th, there should be a bumper attendance to witness the good programme arranged by the club. As for the going, it was fairly good, but was to a certain extent heavy. One satisfactory feature of the meeting was the absence of accident, the cross-country event being raced in perfect safety, all the performers keeping their

Passing the stand St. Patrick's jockey was seen to have a big hold of Mr McManemin's colt; and St. Mary was noticed to be striding along in great form. Rounding the bend to go to the back stretch St. Mary raced into second place, and Stanley ran third. Opposite the stand Mrs Lennard's colours were carried along by Dorothy, and the pale blue on Edna flashed along in a dangerous manner. St. Patrick's rider was, however, sitting still, and kept his colt well in hand in view of a possible struggle for supremacy with St. Mary in the straight. But, there was no necessity for the precaution, as the namesake of the Irish saint passed the post a fairly easy winner with St. Mary next and Edna third. The time was 1min 53sec, and the dividend on the winner £2 12s.

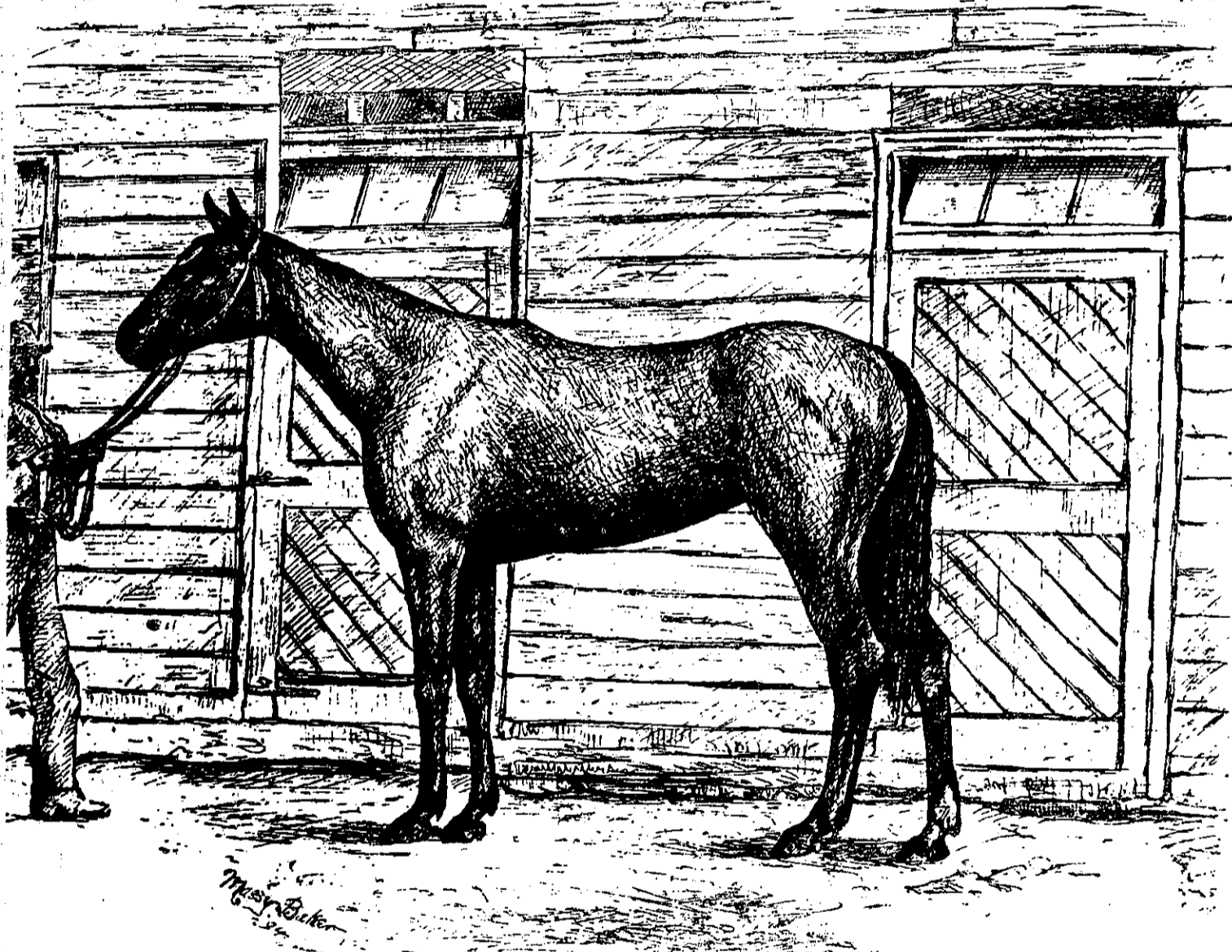
FIVE withdrawals took place from the First Handicap Hurdle Race of 50sovs, one and three-quarter miles, viz., Bombardier and Fishmonger, who were being reserved for the Steeplechase, and Try Fluke, Killaloe and Platch. This left a field of nine, and Belmont and Belle showed up well in the betting. A beautiful start was effected, and Mr Russell's Belle obtained a flying move, sweeping up well extended on the outside just as Mr Halstead dropped his flag. Pansy was hurried along in a manner that at

his field, and whose run was made too late, ran into third position. One thing the race determined for me, and that was to relinquish Belmont for the Grand National Hurdle Race. After Saturday's display I must pass him by. Skittles ran her mile and three-quarters over sluggish going in 3min 36sec, and took her jumps in finished style, and her owner and trainer may be commended for the polish and clever fencing power he has put in this mare. Her backers were paid the nice dividend of £10 16s.

BACKERS were next confronted with the principal event of the day, the Britannia Handicap of 60 sovs, nine and three-quarter furlongs, for which Folly was scratched. This left a quartette to fight it out, viz., First Nelson 8.0, St. Kilda 8.0, Sunbeam 7.8, and Master Pat 7.0. Mr Burns' mare Sunbeam was made favourite, and Master Pat also carried a fair amount of money. On recent running St. Kilda was indifferently supported; but recent form is not much to go by, as the sequel proved. Master Pat took the lead, and St. Kilda stretched along in a way that clearly proved he was in great fettle. Rounding the bend the gelding and First Nelson improved their positions, and by the time the centre of the stretch opposite the stand was reached, St. Kilda was in command,

and so she lost two or three lengths. I would seriously advise Mr Halstead not to allow this holding business at the post. If a boy is not capable of holding his mount he ought to be ordered back to the paddock and the owner asked to put up another rider. Speaking to Mr Halstead after the races I was glad to hear him say he would adopt such a plan in future. Quite right. It is not fair to other owners to have the start delayed as it was on Saturday, and the sooner jockeys are compelled to hold their own mounts at the post the better. Kathleen was the quickest on her legs, and Carbuncle once set going, raced after her field in a way that showed her chance, with a good start, would have been some justification for the position of favouritism which she shared with Riel. Nelly and Kathleen were the only others in it, and Reil won fairly easily with Nelly second and Kathleen third. The time for the 6 1/2 furlongs was 1min 32sec, and the dividend £6 17s.

Now followed the best Steeplechase I have seen since I have been in New Zealand, and a gratifying feature was the absence of accidents. There was no horse asked to share the fate meted out to poor Isidore and the many other chasers who saw their last glimpse of earth on the North Shore



MR. J. KEAN'S B.M. "LOTTIE," BY MUSKAPEER-LADYBIRD.

legs, and not a single spill being recorded. Nothing but unstinted praise can be given with respect to the starting, and Mr Halstead deserves the thanks of everyone for the clever way in which he sent his fields away. I have never had occasion to unfavourably comment upon this gentleman's starting, and I was glad to see that his efforts on Saturday did not fall below the successful standard which his work of the past has established. Taken as a whole, and viewed from any standpoint, the meeting was entirely successful, and I sincerely trust the fine opening which has been made will be followed up successfully on the Queen's Birthday.

There were no defections from the opening race of the day, the Handicap Maiden Plate of 30 sovs, one mile, and the seven competitors were well backed by the public. St. Patrick, whom I tipped to win last week, was placed in a state of favouritism with Swiftsure, who was also regarded with favourable eyes by backers. A false start sent the two Sains, St. Patrick and St. Mary, galloping pretty well round to the stand, and three more breakaways were made before Mr Halstead saw them on even terms and dropped the flag. When that took place St. Patrick rushed to the front and Stanley showed up in the rear.

once showed her rider was going to pursue his usual policy of making the pace warm. My favourite, Skittles, was going in a very steady manner, and when they swept past the stand she was well with them, and was, moreover, fencing faultlessly. Belmont was at the back, and Warrior was close to Skittles, who was in second position. Opposite the stand the navy blue body of Belle's rider was carried into third place, and Skittles was sticking close to Pansy's quarters. The hurdle in the straight saw Pansy still in command, with Skittles second, Belle third, and then came Warrior and Belmont, who was commencing, not a second too soon, to try and get on even terms with the leaders. Rounding the bend leading to the back of the course Skittles rushed at Pansy, and after a few fighting strides, beat Mr Macmanemin's mare, and Belle tried hard to catch Mr Stenning's mare. The little Kohimarama representative however kept at her work, and running as game as a pebble led the visiting mare to the last hurdle. Skittles took it cleverly, but Belle struck, although the striking did not affect her chance one iota. Skittles had the winning power and triumphed in a manner that clearly convinced me the favourable opinion I have always held respecting her was a correct one. Belmont, who was allowed to run too much behind

Master Pat was second, and First Nelson third. Sunbeam was last. From this out the result was never doubted, for St. Kilda won hard held by two lengths. From start to finish nothing could live with him; and so backers of recent form went down. The time was 2min 15sec, and the dividend £3 16s.

When the Pony Handicap of 30 sovs, six and a-half furlongs, came up for decision, the owner of Norina was requested to produce an A.R.C. 14.2 certificate, and as he could not, the two-year-old was not allowed to start. Mr Wynyard was asked to measure her, but I think he was perfectly right in refusing to accept the responsibility. None of the others fell out, and so backers had to choose between eleven runners. The start was delayed for a long while, owing to the way Carbuncle was handled, and fully half-a-dozen good starts could have been affected had Mr Massey Baker's mare not been held by her trainer some two or three lengths behind everything else. Mr Halstead, naturally enough, did not want to see her left, and so good opportunities and time were wasted until, wearied at the sight of Carbuncle being held by the bride at the rear of everything else, the starter dropped his flag. As could only have been expected, Carbuncle by this time was cold and would not re-

course. And a more even race than that run between Bombardier and Belle it would be hard to see across country. A dead heat in a steeplechase has not often to be recorded, and although there are those who will question the accuracy of the placing, there is no appeal from the decision given. Once a judge opens his mouth it is not my place to say whether I agree or do not agree with him. One thing I am very certain of, and that is, the decision given on Saturday was a strictly honest one. And if there was the slightest doubt in the judge's mind (not that I say there was) he was quite right and deserves commendation for placing Belle and Bombardier upon a position of equality. All the contestants jumped well, and Belle in particular cleared her obstacles splendidly. As for Bombardier I have never seen him fence so well before, and the way he battled up the straight with Belle shows that he lacks nothing in the region of heart. Fishmonger raced gamely and led for three parts of the journey, but after the way he finished on Saturday I will hardly stand him for the Great Northern Steeplechase. Chester was ran to a standstill, and Potentate carried his weight in the pluckiest manner possible. But the burden and the hills told on him and he had to succumb. A word must also be said in favour