

the city is a good one, especially for the winter months. It will, however, play the very Mephistopheles with the other theatres, see if it don't. In the meantime Dan Barry and company, on the strength of their phenomenal metropolitan season, will once again tempt fortune in the country.

Maggie Moore's new piece *The Circus Queen*, is not likely to prove much of a go. The same may be said of Garner's *Morals of Mayfair* at the Bijou; and I don't think Bland Holt is making more than a Million of Money at the Princess Theatre. The music halls are open, and that's about all.

In connection with the Suburban Easter Fair here, the last night's receipts were presented to Mr Pat Finn, the manager, and the ladies of the committee have subscribed to the tune of £30, with a view of presenting Mr Finn with a gold watch suitably inscribed. This was a Roman Catholic Fair, and though the committee started out to make about £300, he landed a profit of over £600.

So thoroughly do those people go to work and support each church movement that now, encouraged by the success of St. Brigid's, the Archbishop of St. Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday last announced that the Roman Catholics intended having a gigantic fair and bazaar in the Exhibition Building, Melbourne, whereby it was expected to raise twenty-two thousand pounds clear profit. Think of that, ye good people of New Zealand.

We have a refined musical wonder here, one "Nozart," who, under the guidance of Mr P. Finn, has created much astonishment. Without the use of hands, feet, or any mechanical appliances whatever, he plays everything imaginable on the piano, and without any aid from lips or mouth, he plays the flute, whistle, etc. Nozart (*not* Mozart) is a veritable wonder, and is besides a whole show in himself.

Mrs Rose Vernon Paget, now on the way to London, writes me, dating her letter from the Atlantic Ocean. Things generally from a theatrical point of view, are off, off, very much off.

May 20th.

The Sapio-Urso concerts in the Town Hall, Melbourne, are being largely attended, the general impression being that the seven nights season is all to brief.

Bland Holt, who hasn't been doing too well at the Princess Theatre, last night for the first time gave us *A Life of Pleasure*, splendidly acted, and magnificently mounted. *A Life of Pleasure* is the joint work of Harris (with a handle to his name, Sir Augustus) and the late Henry Pettitt. The big thing of the production is a battle, and as a military spectacle bangs Baronagher and "his nibs," you know bangs His Satanic Majesty. The scenery is at once realistic and beautiful, and in Gordon's best style. Miss Watson Mrs Bland Holt, and Sass, Baker, and Bland Holt tumble into the hard work of the play, and score. Last night the piece was over a trifle too late, with the result that last trams and trains were missed, and everybody had to walk home. This exercise will, however, be avoided in the future.

At the Bijou Theatre Garner is staging "Friends," a piece well known throughout Australia, and made famous by the London Comedy Company. Old Harwood was in the cast, and made things hum humorously. Walter Bently gave a natural reading of Doctor Thompson, and Garner himself was a passable Dawson. The small part of Mrs. Meanley shone out conspicuously in the hands of Miss Annie Taylor. Miss Edith Bland wasn't bad as Mrs. Dawson, and Hans Phillips was as big a success in the small part of Theodore as Mr Dwer was hopelessly overweighted in the part of Maurice.

Maggie Moore is in her last nights now at the Theatre Royal, and is playing out the remainder of the seasons in a few revivals of her most popular pieces. Charlie Holloway and his Dramatic Company open next Saturday in "The Shamrock and the Rose," full particulars of which will be sent you later on.

The Alhambra, and Frank M. Clark and the Gaiety Music Hall, and the Cogills are open, but there is not too much in the shape of sugar hanging round.

Dan Barry and the Fitzgerald Brothers' Circus are at the Alexandra Theatre, and they will do an immense business, the show already being the talk of the town.

You'll remember what I wrote in the *REVIEW* when Barry started out at the Alexandra. I then said that if any man in Australia could turn the big barn into a paying concern that man was Dan Barry. Dan (an old schoolfellow of

mine by the way) has more than fulfilled my prophecy. The house is packed nightly.

A somewhat amusing case came off in the Carlton Police Court a day or two back, and touched largely on the gratitute racket. Phil Kirby, a well-known theatrical manager, sued Pat Finn, a well-known theatrical writer of Melbourne, for an alleged debt of a few pounds. The case was defended by a well-known lawyer, who spluttered and began proceedings by asking for an adjournment. This brought Pat Finn hotly to his feet to oppose the adjournment asked for by his own counsel. Bench and auditors were amused, and Finn, in the most unconcerned manner possible, waded in to conduct his own case. For the defence conclusive evidence was tendered that not only had Kirby been paid over and over again, but together with his wife and little ones had been found a shelter for six months at Finn's expense. Need we add that the case was dismissed, and in reality should never have come into court. So much for man's gratitude.

THE FLAT.

MELBOURNE NOTES.

(FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT).

MELBOURNE, May 23.

ALTHOUGH the May Meeting at Caulfield of the Melbourne Hunt Club was a miserable affair in its way, it has at least been productive of an interesting protest with an awkward complication for the finale, somewhat akin to the Tim Swiveller-Sainfoin episode. Mr Howell's chestnut mare Ilium, with 8.2 up, defeated Mr Filgate's gelding Chiron, 8.0, in the Handicap Flat Race by a short head. The mare was protested against on the ground that she had crossed the latter—an incident so marked that some surprise was manifested at the club stewards giving Ilium the benefit of the doubt. The owner of Chiron appealed against the decision to the V.R.C. committee, and after carefully sifting the evidence that body awarded the stakes to the gelding, Premier being promoted to second place. Naturally the fielders, seeing that they had paid out seven to one over Ilium, were very wroth at the turn affairs had taken; but with the best possible grace they returned eight to one to the backers of Chiron. This feeling of indignation is very marked in a letter which Mr Alfred Josephs has contributed to the sporting Press. He points out that "there are not a few who take the liberty of arguing that on a question of fact, stewards who see the race are far better qualified to form a correct judgment than a tribunal who must be guided by the balance of evidence submitted to them. That the decisions of the committee have not given entire satisfaction, there can be no shadow of doubt; and, worse than all, both book-makers and backers have alike suffered." To obtain justice, it is Mr Josephs's intention to induce the Victorian Club committee to pass a new betting law to the effect that, in the event of a protest being lodged and entertained by the stewards of any racing club, the decision of that body shall be final and bets shall follow the decision. It is questionable, however, if Mr Josephs will be able to carry his point. Certainly paying out on two horses is a rather nasty and vexatious contingency to reckon with, but the betting law as it stands is preferable to an alteration permitting wagering on the first past the post principle. If that were adopted smart rascals would undoubtedly turn such a golden opportunity to advantage to practice some bold swindles. At present owners are allowed three days in which to decide to appeal, and as a way out of the difficulty created by this and similar cases it has been suggested that owners who feel inclined to appeal should give notice of their intention to do so on the same day as the protest has been dismissed. With that fact before them bookmakers could reasonably delay their settling until the clearing up of the matter. In this connection I may mention that the committee of the Australian Jockey Club have wisely decided that no fresh evidence will be heard in future appeals.

The Adelaide bookmakers are making a strong effort just now to have the existing betting law remedied. The members of the South Australian ring are not at war with the totalisator, but with the Act suppressing all public wagering. They lately approached the labour members to see if they would support an alteration in the Totalisator Bill so as to permit the resumption of betting on the courses. The proposal was not viewed with a favourable eye, and the labour mem-

bers feeling that the public had agreed with the Legislature in practically wiping out the fielders were decidedly averse to re-establishing the old system. As far as Adelaide is concerned there has been no falling off in racing as a result of the stoppage of course betting, and therefore the clubs who gather a big income from totalisator percentages are not likely to make any move to have the book-makers wrongs redressed.

At the May Day race meeting held at Brisbane the mare Splendide, a capital performer, won a race, but was disqualified on account of carrying short weight to the extent of 3½ lb. In addition to that the Q.T.C., after holding an inquiry into the matter disqualified the owner, P. Nolan, and the mare twelve months for suspicious practices. In 1892 Splendide appropriated both the Queensland and Brisbane Cups, and was the favourite for the latter event to be run this week.

Mr C. M. Lloyd has returned from his Maoriland tour, and he is delighted with what he saw over there. He speaks in high terms of the young St. Legers and Maxims which he had the pleasure of inspecting.

Mr S. H. Gollan has returned to Hawke's Bay for a few months, and is expected to return to Melbourne to witness the spring gallops of his team.

Very few horses are training at Flemington at the present time. Hova, the Newmarket winner, is one of the regular attendants on the tracks. Since his famous win he has thickened considerably and is developing quite a weight for age appearance.

The touts speak in gratifying terms of a chestnut colt attached to Mr J. Sanders' string. The youngster is a son of Robinson Crusoe, and he is known as Xury.

La Gloria, who met with an accident two months ago through having a stable fork run into her leg, has recovered and is being treated to light work.

A rather novel racing action was disposed of in the county court last week. The defendant was Mr G. Mayer, the proprietor of the Epsom racecourse, from whom Mrs Bessie N. King, horseowner, sought to recover the half share of the proceeds realised, some £73, in selling Yarmon as the winner of the "Novel Selling Race." This event was decided in February last, and Mrs King's horse Fusee was second. The terms of the race stipulated that the winner was to be sold for 80gns, and any surplus over the selling price was to be equally divided between the club and the owner of the second horse. As Yarmon, who was entered to be sold for nil, was disposed of for £73, Mrs King claimed £36 10s, the half of the former amount on account of Fusee running into the next position. The defence was that "any surplus over the selling price" simply meant the selling price fixed on the terms of the race—£80. The judge, however, decided that the plaintiff's interpretation of the condition was the correct one, and returned a verdict on her behalf for the amount claimed.

Two old-time jockeys, Sammy Cracknell and S. P. Davis, both very small men, figured in a court incident last week. Sam Davis, since he relinquished racing, has blossomed into the licensee of the Palace Hotel at Newmarket, and a member of the local municipal council. It appears that Cracknell, who was very drunk, had been tormenting the barmaid and misconducting himself in the bar. He defied Davis to "put him out," and the licensee while attempting the feat kicked his brother pigmy in the face. As a result Davis sued Cracknell for unlawful assault, and the latter retaliated with a cross summons. The brawl was described as a battle of the pigmies, and "six of one and half a dozen of the other." The Bench thought that both were to blame, and accordingly dismissed the cases.

For the information of Maoriland cyclists I may state that the next Austral Meeting will probably commence on the 1st December next on the Melbourne Cricket Ground. This year the Austral Wheel Race will be worth £250, and it is to be run in heats with only three—instead of six as formerly—out of each heat for the final.

The captain of the Brisbane Bicycle Club, Mr C. Stewart, has ridden from Melbourne to Brisbane, a distance of 1,200 miles, in 14½ days.

*Bona fide* hunters are to be catered for at the next V.A.T.C. Grand National Steeplechase Day. This club has initiated the V.A.T.C. Amateur Challenge Cup of £100, the distance being two miles. Amateurs who have never ridden the winner of a hurdle race or steeplechase will be allowed 7lbs, and those who have never previously ridden

in such races will be allowed 14lbs. All horses are to be ridden by members or honorary members of the club.

As regards weather the final day of the Adelaide Racing Club Birthday meeting did not open auspiciously. On Saturday the racing was very fair. Port Admiral followed up his successes of previous meetings by winning the Park-side Stakes, covering the mile and a furlong in 1min 29½secs. He had no trouble disposing of Quality, who finished second, with Principle third. A rank outsider in Mr Robertson's filly Tinstream (Gang Forward—Tinfinder) appropriated the City Handicap, the principal event of the day, beating the St. Alban's filly Parthia home by a length, with Moscow third. The winner paid a dividend of £15 13s. The Adelaide Stakes fell to Patterson's Harold, who turned over £38 17s to the lucky investors who had fancied his chance. A speedy filly named Monastery was the favourite, but she could not get within three lengths of Harold, while the Welshman finished third. Elastic won the Steeplechase, and Diavolo the First the Hurdle Race.

Leyland, one of the few remaining sons of St. Alban, distinguished himself at Moonee Valley on Saturday by winning in brilliant style the May Handicap, eight furlongs and a half, in 1min 51½secs. Mr Cooks' The Friend, who has joined Mr Uphill's string bound for India, ran into second place, and Linburn managed to get third. All racing men remember that wonderful little hurdler The Agent, and one of his sons known as Agent was made a red hot favourite for the Handicap Hurdle Race. He, however, fell at the first hurdle, injuring his shoulder to such an extent that it will be some time before he will recover. This event was appropriated by Sweep, with Jake and Baritone as his comrades at the finish. The smart Newminster filly Mysia ran a dead heat with Tomboy in the Cranmallan Handicap, but beat the latter easily by four lengths in the deciding heat. Picaroon by Bonnie Carlisle was placed first in the Handicap Steeplechase, Black Bolton in the Langwarrin Handicap, and Colorado in the Selling Flat Race. A distance Handicap Trot of two miles found a winner in Madden, who with 250yds behind, covered the distance in 5min 48½secs. Osterley was amongst the unsuccessful competitors.

Owners, Note!

AUCKLAND RACING CLUB.

This day, Thursday, June 7th, by 9 p.m. the following acceptances will be due:—

- Second Pony Handicap Hurdle Race, 1½ miles, 1 sov
- Handicap Hurdle Race, 1½ miles, 2 sovs
- Second Winter Welter Handicap, 7 furlongs, 1 sov
- Tally-Ho Handicap Steeplechase, about 3 miles, 3 sovs

GISBORNE PARK STEEPLECHASE CLUB.

On Saturday, June 16th, by 9 p.m., nominations for the following events will close with the secretary, Mr M. G. Nasmith, at the Argyll Hotel, Gisborne:

- Handicap Hurdle Race, 2 miles, 1 sov
- Ladies' Bracelet, 1 mile and a distance, ½ sov
- Winter Oats, 6 furlongs, 15s
- Gisborne Park Steeplechase, 3½ miles, 1 sov
- Hunters' Steeplechase, 2½ miles, ½ sov
- Final Handicap, 1 mile and a distance, 1 sov

Auckland Coursing Club.

THE Great Northern Challenge Stakes Meeting takes place on Wednesday next and the Saturday following, and there is every prospect of the fixture being largely attended and a very popular one. There will be quite an intercolonial flavour about the meeting, as dogs from the South and from Australia are going to take part, and the sport provided at the Avondale Plumpton should be of the best. Final payments will be made on June 11th, the draw takes place on the 12th at 7 p.m., and the card will be called over at 8 p.m. on the 12th at the British Hotel. The sale of privileges in connection with the meeting will be held by Messrs Digby Tonks and Co. on Friday next at noon at the Brunswick Mart. We trust the Coursing Club will have a prosperous meeting.

The last race at the recent Normanby Trotting meeting was run in the dark, and several of the contestants being in the saddling paddock when the start was made, dashed out and joined the runners in the race up the straight. One of them, Le Corbeau, has since been disqualified, with the rider, Keith, for two years, and the nominator, R. Lucena, has been fined £7. In arriving at this decision the Normanby stewards acted on the complaint of the starter.