

After the Races.

[By Gipsy King.]

THE FEILDING RACES.

FIRST DAY.

Mr Edmund Goodbehere, who has long occupied the position of secretary to the Feilding Jockey Club, was in his customary place, and with the assistance of the stewards (among whom there are many good "workers," much different to some clubs where the secretary has to practically do all the work), everything went off as happily as the proverbial marriage bell. I have to add my thanks to the other pressmen to Mr Goodbehere for the courtesy extended to us, and hope to spend as pleasant a time next meeting.

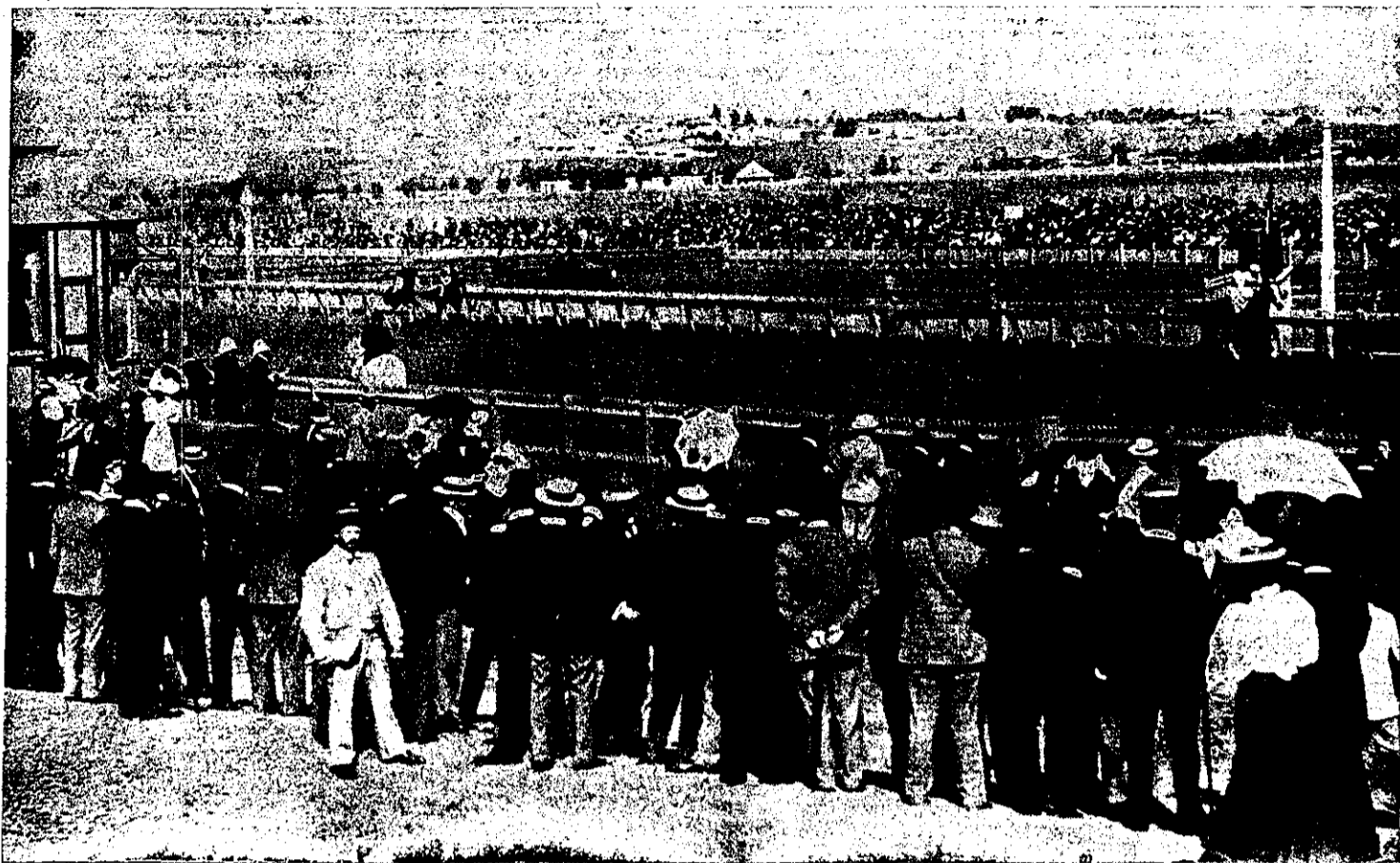
Mr E. Woods, the starter, was on duty as usual, and was using Saywell and James' starting machine, a simply-constructed affair after the style of Crawford's. Mr Woods was not seen at his best at the meeting, as he had several troublesome horses, and one or two green ones that were making their first appearance before a starting machine. No blame can be attached to anyone when these uneducated animals get left.

The racing during the meeting was not of a particularly sensational character, the small margin between the top weights and the lowest weights being accountable for this, because what I might term the six-stone division had no chance of defeating the eight-stone division. This was very noticeable in the actual racing. The principal race of the first day, the St. Andrew's Handicap of 200 sovs, one mile and a half (always a well-contested race), proved a gift to Mahaki (8.8), as he practically had the rest of the field beaten at a mile and a quarter. Rip Van Winkle gave the son of Ingomar his company up to the turn, where Leda, who had been lying rather far out of the race, made her effort, and Rip Van Winkle gamely answered another call from his rider. Mahaki, however, was not to be denied on this occasion, and as Tommy Taylor kept him going in case of a surprise, he won easily by half a length from Leda, Rip Van Winkle three lengths away third, Errand Boy fourth. The latter appears to be getting too much racing just now. The time for the race (on a hard, flat course), 2min 38 3/5sec, is nearly equal to the best, and as it was corroborated by several private watches it may be relied upon. Man-o'-War was last all the way; in fact, he was never with the field, although his jockey plied the whip freely and unnecessarily for the best part of the distance. It was thought by his trainer that something was seriously wrong with the horse, as he was completely exhausted when he reached his loose-box (a short distance from the course), so it was decided not to start him the second day. Hotspur pulled up sore, and was taken home the next day. If Mahaki races as freely in the Auckland Cup as he did at Feilding Mr Wi Pere will win that which he was deprived of on a previous occasion. The amount of racing Mahaki has done lately gives him a rather light appearance, as if he had been hurried. There does not appear to be any leg trouble, and he pulled up sound each day, on a course that would test any gammy legged 'uns.

Blarney won the Kiwitea Stakes, of one mile, like a racehorse, and he is evidently partial to this distance. Had Douglas (by Crawford Priory) left the barrier with the others he must have made a race of it at the finish, judging by the ground he made up and his prominent position at the finish, but it is difficult to say how easy Blarney won, although it was only a half a length victory, as Whittaker had a nice hold of the son of Apremont, on whom I was pleased to see "Andy Bob" have a fair win. Pompon (8.3) ran in this event, but was never dangerous, and his trainer wisely, I think, took him home the next day, as the Wapiti gelding does not like hard going.

SECOND DAY.

The weather was again beautifully fine, and for many rather too warm, but the attendance was hardly so good as on the first day. There were some very acceptable dividends during the afternoon, and backers had some difficulty in finding



FINISH OF THE V.R.C. OAKS.—THUNDER QUEEN WINNING.

winners. The racing on the second day produced one or two decent finishes, and to backers one or two surprises.

The Shorts Handicap was the first race on the card, and Flying Shot was installed first favourite, but the big grey was not quite himself after his Wellington trip, and the finish was left to those two slippery customers, Gold Cup and Sedgebrook, the former winning by a head, while the Hawera-owned colt, Carrick, filled third position.

Although Glenslg paid a dividend of £11 12s. in the Second Hurdle Race, Mr W. Roberts' win was very popular, three cheers being accorded him.

The Manchester Handicap, the chief race on the second day, was looked upon as a pretty fair thing for Mahaki, notwithstanding his 9st 6lb, and if anything was likely to beat him it would be Leda (8st 3lb) or Rip Van Winkle (7st 6lb). The black horse took charge of Taylor shortly after the start, and he let him run along in the front until approaching the turn, where Lorelei and Rip Van Winkle closed up. Then the little mare from Wellington (Leda) put in her claim after rounding the turn, and her challenge was so resolute that Mahaki cried enough, and Lorelei tackled Leda, but the latter was galloping well within herself, and ran home an easy winner by half a length. Tubiwei ran well in this race for over a mile, as also did Blarney, who appeared as if he were going to take a hand in the finish until Leda ran past him so comfortably. Leda is only a handful, but is very useful, and staying, I think, is one of her accomplishments, and just at present her owner would appear to have a chance of placing the Wellington Cup on his side-board. Although Mahaki was beaten in this race, he was not disgraced, and as Joe Griffiths, his trainer, has a few weeks before the Auckland Cup is due for decision, I think he will make good use of the time.

There were some long faces in the Lawn when Gold Cup won the Railway Handicap and paid a dividend of £13 14s, after showing good form earlier in the day. The half-sister to Banner is very well just now. Errand Boy, who was

second, got into a bad position coming up the straight; otherwise he might have had a chance. Sedgebrook also ran a good mile. He is not generally regarded as being a very game horse, but he was the most consistent horse at the meet and I think Belcher can improve him a little by Christmas.

NOTES.

[By Gipsy King.]

The second payment for the Ashurst Hack Guineas of 100 sovs, for three-year-old hacks, to be decided on December 29th next year, numbers fifteen. Some are thoroughbreds, while the majority are what may be termed fairly well bred. The best of the fifteen on breeding appears to be the chestnut filly by Forester—Verboso, brown gelding by Cap-a-pie—Leita (half-brother to the "people's" grey Musket), chestnut filly Gipsy Queen, by Gipsy King—Steel All (half sister to Levanter and St. Patrick), brown gelding Derry, by Derringer—Nectarine (half brother to Calmarine), chestnut colt by Strenuous—White Rose, brown filly by Vanguard—Little Vixen, and the bay gelding by Foul Shot—Gladiator mare. The latter, I think, is half brother either to Swift or Light. From this lot I think the winner will come, and the one with the most condition will get to the end of the mile first.

Owners and trainers and students of racing have been much perplexed this season at the phenomenal time registered by some horses. It is useless to take notice of time as recorded at Wanganui coastal meetings, as the starting is done in such an erratic manner that to have any reasonable idea of what time a horse really does record, it is necessary for those interested to be on the spot, and see under what circumstances the time is taken, or how the start is effected. At Wanganui, for instance, some of the races were started by Crawford's machine, and one or two others (small field races such as the hurdle race) were started by flag and really in front of

the distance, but as the programme and race cards give the distance as "about," the timers would not give a horse credit for running two miles and a distance in 4min 9sec, such as the official timekeeper posted up. Every owner or trainer should be his own timekeeper if he wants reliable information in that direction. At Otaki the official time for the Trial Hurdle Race, one mile and a half, won by Bohemian, was returned as 2min 53 1/2sec. If he travelled the distance in 3min 3 1/2sec it is more than I would give him credit for doing. At the same meeting the Hack Flying Handicap was run in 1min 16 1/2sec. Not bad for a country track. Why, if we were to take serious notice of the times registered lately, half the owners would be getting ready to take their mokes over to Melbourne for the Grand National Hurdle Race and Newmarket Handicap, which would be a good thing for some of the horses that have lately put up such lightning-like times.

Newhaven's two-year-old half-brother Ocean (by Eridspord) is in training at Bulls under the charge of Jim Hathaway. This distinguished colt (by relationship) has been nominated for one of the short distance races at the Rangitikei meeting at New Year's time, but I hardly think he can be in anything like prime condition. He should be ready for the two-year-old races at Wanganui in March. Jim has also Gunboat, Aurora, and Mystical in his stable.

Errand Boy, so far, has not been a profitable investment for Mr Alf. Smith, who deserves a turn of luck as he is a good sport. At the Feilding meeting I fancy Errand Boy's failure was due more to want of horsemanship than want of pace and condition. Barney Coyle is training this game son of Cap-a-pie.

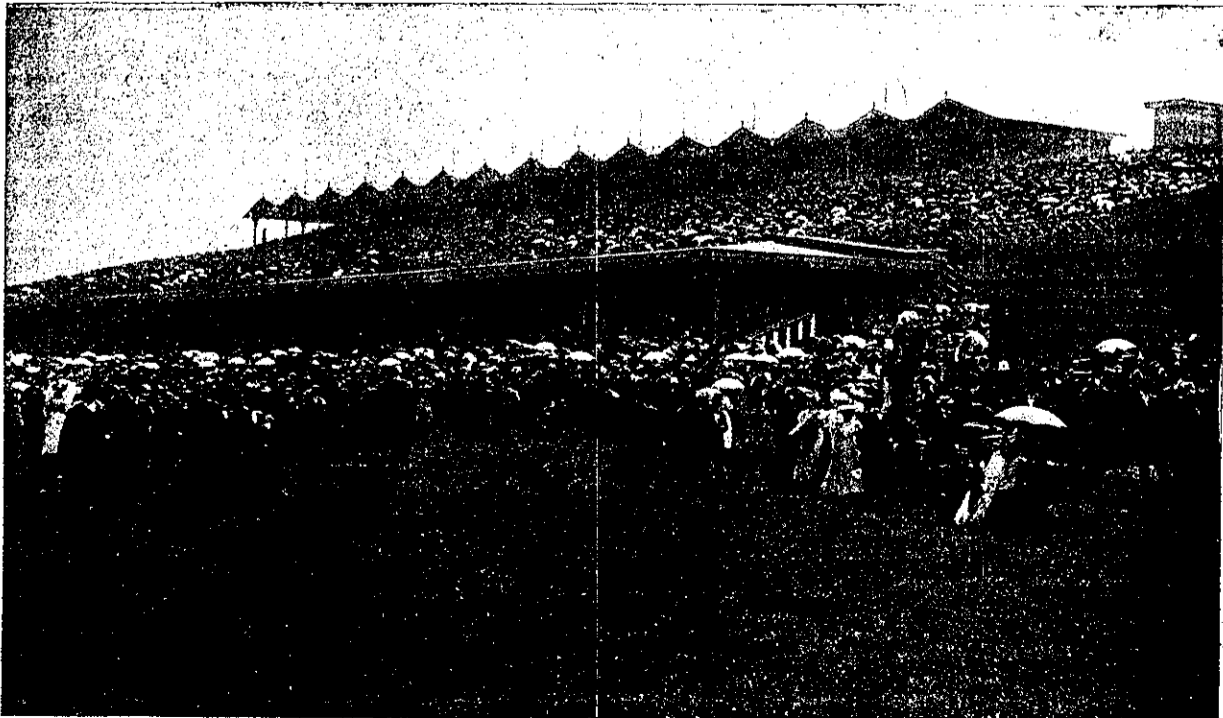
L. Proctor now has in work, at Palmerston North, the hack Clearlight (by St. Clair, by Dead Shot), sometimes known as the horse with "whiskers" on his legs. Te Uku (who is located at Ellerslie) and Clearlight were very evenly matched when they were racing about the Manawatu district at the beginning of the year, and, as she has not won more than a hat full of money, Clearlight's excellence is easily gauged.

I have had an enforced holiday lately, but during that time I could not help noticing how suddenly a lot of the sporting scribes of N.Z. have discovered that Lady Zetland is a good mare. Why, even before she won the N.Z. Cup, she was the best mare and probably the best performer we have had in New Zealand for years past.

One or two useful hacks made their debut at the Feilding meeting. En Evant, who ran second on sufferance in the First Hack Race, is a very evenly proportioned, 15.3, chestnut gelding, six years, by Forerunner. His dam is not known at present, but it is understood he was bred on Mr S. H. Gollan's station. En Evant was very big in condition, and had very little galloping before the meeting, so that if his owners, Messrs F. McBeth and Co, of Kiwitea, decide to go on with him they may soon have a win. Aquafortis, who won the Hack Hurdle Race on the second day, is a shapely, 15.2, five-year-old son of Wapiti and a mare named White Eyes, who competed in hack company some years ago. Aquafortis will not be a top sawyer at hurdle racing, although his 2min 55sec for one and a half miles was a very good performance.

A horse that I was much struck with was Troubadour, a raking big bay gelding by Sou'Wester—Betty, who is the property of Mr J. T. Moore, owner of Dante. In build and style for hurdle racing or steeplechasing I hardly know which I would prefer. Troubadour showed some pace in the race he competed in at Feilding, but there was a lot of indifferent horsemanship noticeable at Feilding, and the form of several horses that competed there was all wrong in consequence.

was very green, and gave some trouble to the starter, being left at the post in one race. I noticed that he has been nominated out of the hack class at Rangitikei and Manawatu. Mr Moore



V.R.C. GRANDSTAND, LAWN, AND HILL ON CUP DAY, 1896.