

## CHRISTCHURCH.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

THE events of this week have not been so numerous nor so important as to afford much cause for notice, still they have not been without interest altogether. The chief topic has been the settlement of the long standing dispute with Mr. G. G. Stead, representing other owners and the Dunedin Jockey Club. A week or two since, things looked to assume serious shape, but through the meditation of friends on both sides a settlement has been come to without resource to the law courts. It is perhaps rather a significant fact that Tirailleur should have advanced in the quotations for the New Zealand Cup, while his stable companion, the mysterious Jet d'Eau—supposed to be carrying some stable money—should have receded. During the week a commission was executed to the amount of £400 in favour of the top weight, the amount being got in at an average of 7 to 1, the present price of the son of Musket—Florence McCarthy being 6 to 1.

Coursing is not quite dead in Canterbury, though one may well sigh for a return of those good old days when the sport was one in which the greatest interest was taken. The shareholders in the lease of the Heathcote property are endeavouring to start a Plumpton on their ground, and I am told by those interested that the prospect of their doing so is looked forward to with some degree of certainty. There has been a change recently in the proprietary of the Heathcote grounds, which is said to account for the increased vitality in the business affairs of the club.

Mr. Stead's horses in training have not been seriously affected by the spread of influenza as was reported last week, and they are now being sent along again, and are probably the most forward lot in training in Canterbury. There is still some doubt as to what Mr. Stead's intentions are, seeing that Medallion is fairly well treated in the Melbourne Cup, in which race he was left after the last forfeit. I don't pretend to know what will be done, but with only nine weeks before the decision of the great spring events, I think it can only be a week now at the outside before we know definitely. Mr. Stead has others beside his colt Medallion in which to depend, but I should not wonder if the Napier trip does not constitute one of the features of the coming campaign, though I should indeed like to see Medallion land fit and well on the other side to try conclusions with the best of his year—Titan, who may not be quite the invincible gentleman after all. It is the custom to make excuses for beaten horses, but Medallion, whose training was interrupted in the spring and well into midsummer by the development of two ugly splints, could not possibly have been at his best, and when it is remembered that he was practically a green colt, giving away to Titan 5lbs, it is not surprising that he should have had to put up with a beating, more especially for when it is known that Titan had an almost unbroken course of training right through the winter, spring and summer months.

The New Zealand Trotting Association sent a deputation this week to interview Captain Russell with the object of getting a concession made, whereby Clubs may hold four meetings in the year without requiring to give more than a minimum of £200 per meeting. It was proposed recently to introduce a Bill amending the "Gambling and Lotteries Act" so as to embody these conditions, but so far nothing appears to have been done.

The question as to which was the better cross-country horse of the four, Ahua, Clarence, The Agent, or Canard was raised some time back, and judges agree to differ on the subject. Butler thinks the position belongs rightly to The Agent; three times returned a Grand National winner, twice a winner in Auckland, and altogether a great performer under big weights and over long distances. Some time ago Butler gave the old horse away to his nephew, and he had not been heard of for a lengthened period, but while the controversy was going on the old fellow turned up at Riccarton to the surprise of everyone, having wandered back to his old home a few Sundays since. The old chestnut looks very rough on it, but now gets a feed or two regularly, and Patsy says his old favourite shall not be lost sight of again in a hurry.

One of the most enjoyable little proceedings of the whole year is that held about this season at Amberley. The North Canterbury folk hold high festivities on their Steeplechase Day, the racecourse being made a huge picnic ground, and as visitors from a distance are made cordially welcome, the Amberley races are always looked forward to with pleasant anticipation. The racecourse is very prettily situated about two miles from the town and close to the sea, the billows as they dash on the shore loudly proclaiming the near presence of the boundless pacific. This year's fixture took place on Thursday under the most favourable climatic conditions, the result being that there was a large attendance and to say a very successful gathering in every way. The several events were all strongly contested, and some exciting finishes added interest to the proceedings. The National winner having been withdrawn from the principal event, the Great Northern Steeplechase, Daddy Longlegs' stable companion, Victor, had pride of place. For the event Erin-go-Bragh had been let in very lightly, presumably from the fact that he had never been seen over stiff fences, but I should just like to remark here that when a horse is entered for a steeplechase the presumption is that he can jump, and he should be handicapped accordingly. However, this may be, the grey son of St. George did not succeed in pulling off his initial race over country, as he fell when leading his field, and when it was only a question of his standing up to secure an easy victory. Later on in the day Erin-go-Bragh was brought out and had no difficulty whatever in securing the Farmers' Steeplechase of 40 sovs., the second most valuable prize at the meeting. But to hark back to the first race. This was taken by Enterprise, a handsome grey gelding of the pure hunter type, but one that possesses a far greater amount of pace than his appearance would indicate. He won somewhat easily from Young Guy, the winner of the event last year, with old Victor third. Enterprise was also victorious in the Seadown Steeplechase, the runner-up again being Young Guy. The winner carried a 7lb. penalty on account of annexing the first race, and this had the effect of bringing the horses as near as possible together, and Mr. Claridge, the owner of Enterprise, who was on his own horse, and who is one of our most accomplished amateurs had to do all he knew to get his horse home first. The Hunter's Plate was taken by Glen, after a great struggle with Why Not, and the victory of the former was mainly due to the excellent horsemanship of Mr. G. Murray-Aynsley. Industry, in the hands of his owner, Mr. C. Wynn-Williams, had an easy task in putting down his opponents in the Tally-ho Plate, and my remarks anent this horse last week where thus in a measure carried out. True, he had very little to beat in the race just mentioned, but he could do no more than win. The Consolation was won by Preston, his first win over jumps.

## ELLERSLIE TRAINING NOTES.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1.

Harrison has his team in work. Reprisal, Miss Cole, and Workman went once round the course proper, finishing the last three furlongs fast. They all moved sound, but it was only a good working gallop. Antelope went twice round at half speed, moving freely, and is looking well. Patchwork worked on the tan, going round three times at a steady pace. Mr. Bobbett's Captivator—Madcap colt went three times round the middle track—rather a stiff piece of work for a two-year-old at this time of year. Fishmonger cantered four times round on the tan.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2.

The weather being beautifully fine, it was quite a pleasure to visit the course, besides being able to see some useful work. Tamora, Ægyptus, Captivator—Madcap, and Foul Shot—Mystery colts were all sent together three furlongs at racing pace, all finishing together, Tamora going on once round at three-quarter speed.

Torment and Shillelagh were restricted to walking exercise.

Reprisal and Vendetta put in once round on the course proper at half speed.

Glaucus, with sweaters on, went twice round on the tan.

Nap went three times round the tan at a steady pace.

Orestes and the colt by Captivator—Maid of Honor went slowly once round on the course proper, finishing the last three furlongs at about half speed. Both these youngsters are looking and moving well.

Patchwork was sent a good useful gallop twice round the course proper.

Torment only walked, and Capella is being "hacked" about the roads.

Amongst the visitors to the course I noticed the Takapuna sportsman, Mr. E. W. Alison.

## THE TURF.

[BY OLD TURFITE.]

THE Sydney Referee has a leader headed, "The Time Test: Two Styles of Trying Horses.—English v. Australian." It begins: "Perhaps it sounds something akin to presumption on our part to assert that the time test relating to the trial of horses is the better way to accurately judge of animals' abilities to traverse a distance, long or short," etc. Throughout the whole of the leader it is maintained that the Colonial system of trying horses by the time test is far better than the English system of trial horses. Now, as an old racing man, I will try and show that the time test is a fallacy and cannot be depended upon. Say, for instance, that we are going to try a horse a mile over the course he has been in the habit of working. The morning is dull and close, the going rather heavy, and he does his mile in 1 min. 50 secs. You think he may or may not have a show for the race he is entered for. However, you make up your mind to let him start on the off chance. Perhaps you risk a tenner on him. The day arrives for the race; it is fine and clear, and the going good; the course to be run over is completely different to the one you have tried your horse on—say it has a little more uphill or downhill, perhaps a dead flat. However, you start your horse comparatively unbacked, and to your disgust he simply walks in, and you win nothing; the horse's form is exposed, and you have to wait a long time for another chance in a big handicap. Horses like certain courses, and they will run pounds better over one than another. I have seen horses disgracefully beaten at Epsom through the downhill from Tattenham Corner, which a fortnight afterwards ran brilliantly at Ascot, where the finish is all uphill. The English method of trying horses is to have five in the trial: the one to be tried, the trial horse, another to see that he is running up to his form, and two others, to make a true pace from end to end. Jockeys are on the three first, and good stable-boys on the others. There can be no mistake made then, the day and the going affecting them equally, unless a horse goes suddenly off, which his trainer should know. I have seen the Dawsons, Osborne, and other leading trainers, have their horses trained and tried to the hour, having their calculations made to such a nicety that in one case a bet was laid, 1000 to 1, that the horse won by a neck, neither more nor less, and the jockey that rode (Fordham) never knew until after the race that such a bet had been laid. Ten Broeck, when he went to England, relied entirely on the watch, and it was not long before he had to return to America to get further supplies to carry on the campaign. The Referee further states: "But what about that class of horse which races best in silk or the contrary?" etc. That can easily be answered. In all important trials colours are always worn, and the horse that is handicapped with the trial horse will soon tell you if he is running up to his form, and they all will tell you if the horse you are trying is up to the mark, as any experienced trainer knows pretty well the form of his horses from the way they go in their work. The best trial horse I ever knew was a chestnut gelding called "Griffin." He was the biggest rogue that ever ran in public, but he never told a lie at home. Butterfly, Hesperithusa, Croagh Patrick and others were all tried with him before they landed the big "coups" for their owners, and larger sums were won over them than has ever been won in Australia. With all due deference to the Referee, I think that they will find themselves out of pocket if they rely on the time test, especially if a clever trainer has tried his horse on the English principle and the money is on all right.