



THE TURF.

[BY OLD TURFITE.]

The *Canterbury Times*, of January 8, has, under the head of "Current Topics," certain remarks that I cannot pass by unnoticed, as the writer evidently understands racing lore. The remarks regarding the prices that several horses realised at the sale of the Sylvia Park Stud are perfectly correct. There are, however, certain things talked about in Auckland regarding the disposal of the stud that our *confre* has evidently not heard of, such as finessing on the part of Major George and the Bank, regarding the sale to a Sydney syndicate; also to Mr. Hordern, etc. From what I can learn there is likely to be litigation on the subject, but as I am at present unable to get all the exact particulars, I refrain from making any remarks, leaving it to time to work out the problem. That through mismanagement, and some manoeuvring, the stud has been allowed to leave Auckland there is no gain-saying.

I WILL now take up the remarks made regarding the running of Medallion and Crackshot. Considering that the writer of "Current Topics" for the *Canterbury Times* is at a long distance from the Ellerslie course, his remarks regarding the running of the two horses are perfectly justified, with the exception of this sentence: "But it is an unfortunate fact that none of the public critics who witnessed the racing at Ellerslie have thought it worth while to indicate a reason for the reversal of form." By this it is quite evident that either our paper has never reached the *Canterbury Times*, or that my notes on the racing have been overlooked. Without being egotistical, I think I may say that I am the oldest racing man in New Zealand, and have had a great deal of experience with race horses, having commenced as a boy in 1846. I will, therefore, not only repeat what I said in a former issue, but go still further into the matter, and I then think that I can satisfactorily explain the reversal of form. In the first place, every one knows that Crackshot is a "speedy cutter." This class of horse is never to be depended upon, especially if the going is at all heavy. Secondly, many horses will not make their own running. Now, to review the racing. In the Auckland Cup the going was as good as could be desired. St. Andrew and others made the pace a cracker. Crackshot waited until they came back to him, and striding along at the finish won easily. On the Derby Day the ground was very heavy. Only three started. Leolantis was not able to make the running, and Clifford, on Medallion, knew better than to do so. The consequence was that Crackshot had to go to the front, and make the pace. During the race he struck himself several times, and from all appearances he must have done it very badly, as on entering the straight he appeared to collapse all of a sudden. On his return to the paddock the pad was knocked round, and he was bleeding under the knee. In the Auckland Plate, Hilda made the pace for him until entering the straight, when Crackshot came away. The going, also, was better than on the previous day, and I took particular notice that he had not struck himself. This, I think, will account for the reversal of form; though, in my

opinion, when Medallion is fit and well he is the best colt of the two at a mile and a-half. The next paragraph is amusing. Our *confre* little knows the gallant Major. It refers to the fining of Cusden, in the Newmarket Handicap, and reads thus: "But why, we should like to ask, was Major George allowed to interfere in the matter at all? The rules very distinctly provide that the starter may, without reference to the stewards, fine any jockey for disobeying his orders, and if the Major is acquainted with the rules, it was extremely ill-judged on his part to set the authority of that official at naught. We shall not suggest that Major George intends to pay the fine incurred by Cusden, as that would render the owner of Reprisal to a long term of disqualification; but when prominent owners try to excuse the misdeeds of their jockeys they should not be surprised if the youngsters follow up their advantage with all sorts of impertinent demands." My *confre*, you little know the potency of the Major, in his own estimation, or you would not ask that question.

THE weights for the Takapuna Cup and Steeplechase have just been issued by Mr. Knight. Acceptances are due on the 23rd, therefore I shall not go closely into them, as I shall have another chance. Besides that I am anxious to see what owners think of them. For my part I must say that they are the most eccentric ones that I have come across for a long time.

To commence with, let me ask Mr. Knight if he ever saw a fourth or fifth rate three-year-old heading the list, and called upon to give lumps of weight away to horses of all ages. Leolantis, 3 yrs., 9st 5lb., has to give Antelope 9lb, Patchwork 15lbs, Tamora 25lbs, and Clarion, aged, who can gallop a bit, 31lbs. Then Reprisal, 8st 6lb, who never got over a mile, three-quarters being his best distance, is put at even weights with Coalscuttle, who won two races at the late Ellerslie meeting over a mile and a distance, and a mile and a half; also having to give a lot of weight to older horses that can gallop a bit. First-class horses can give a great deal of weight away to third and fourth rate ones, but inferior horses cannot do it, never mind how bad the others are. Taking a casual glance at the weights I think Antelope, Patchwork, Tamora, and Clarion have nothing to complain of.

Now take the Steeplechase. Orlando is top weight with *thirteen stone seven pounds*. Has Mr. Knight ever seen a handicap in England or Ireland where one horse is asked to give another four stone over a country! It simply means this, "You have won enough." I ask anyone who is conversant with racing is it fair that a moderate horse (Orlando can only be classed as such) should be crushed out of a race to give a parcel of scrubbers not worth their oats a chance of winning. Orlando has not beaten anything of much account. Most of his wins may be put down to the splendid condition he has been brought to the post in. He is only a little horse, and does not give you the idea of being able to carry weight. If he starts I pity his jockey, as he is almost sure to come down. Silvio, Hunc, Asper, Takapau and Sentinel have nothing to complain of with regard to their weights. Auckland racehorse owners are most eccentric in their acceptances,

so I think it better to defer attempting to pick a winner until they have decided on the merits of the handicaps.

I CANNOT help calling the attention of owners to the great difference in the handicaps for the Takapuna Cup and the Egmont Handicap. The former was made by Mr. Knight, whose experience in racing has been very meagre, and the latter by Mr. Hately, who was well known during the fifties on the Northern Circuit at home as the owner of First Queen, Stringhalt and many other good ones. Mr. Hately has been racing ever since, so, I think, can be put down as the best judge of racing and handicapping of the two. I will now take the two handicaps. The Takapuna Cup is 1½ miles and the Egmont Handicap is two miles, but as none of the horses are stayers and as their distance is about the same it does not much matter.

TAKAPUNA CUP.		EGMONT HANDICAP.	
	st lb		st lb
Leolantis	9 5	Leolantis	7 8
Leorina	9 4	Patchwork	7 8
Antelope	8 10	Antelope	7 8
Patchwork	8 4	Leorina	7 8
The Dreamer	7 6	The Dreamer	6 7

I think racing men will say that Mr. Hately is the best and fairest handicapper.

THE weights for the Dunedin Cup and Publican's Purse have been declared by Mr. Dowse. The number of entries for the Cup are much smaller than in former years, only numbering 21. This will be further reduced when the acceptances are declared on January 22nd. The race is not run until March 21st, so it is useless to go into the handicap, which appear to be a very good one, especially as there is a great chance of some of the cracks going to the other side. Merrie England, 9st 3lb, heads the list, and has got quite as much as he is entitled to; at the same time if such horses as Crackshot, 8st 10lb; Medallion, 8st 7lb; and Freedom, 8st 3lb., drop out, he may have a chance. Hilda, 8st 9lb, has got every ounce she ought to have, in fact, I consider that she is badly treated, but she may be passed over, as if she and Cissy are stunted to Castor they should both be put out of training, and if they are kept in work any longer it will be detrimental to the foals. Wolverine should be all there with 8st, while Prime Warden, 7st 3lb, has nothing to complain of, while the Auckland horse Patchwork, 7st, if he is ever going to win a good race ought to have a show now. Taking the Handicap roughly Crackshot, 8st 10lb; Wolverine, 8st; and Prime Warden, 7st 3lb, read about the best. The Publican's Handicap had better be left until nearer the day, but glancing down it the following catch the eye, St. Andrew, 9st; Reprisal, 7st 8lb; Tempest, 7st; and Thackeray, 6st 12lb.

ONLY twelve out of the thirty-nine entries have declared content for the Wellington Cup. This is not very flattering to the handicapper, but it must be borne in mind that some of the horses low down in the list could not have won with any weight, therefore the only supposition is that they were entered on the off chance of none of the cracks being there. Crackshot 8st 11lbs, this is 8lbs more than he carried in the Auckland Cup, which he won easily enough; but this race is half a mile shorter. The Wel-