

out to the different stables and stud farms, and if he gets what he considers his due, he will write what he is told, or either picks up information from those who do know or turn plagiarist. If he does not get his dues, or a trainer refuses to let him see through the stables, he vents his spite on him by running him or his horses down, doing all he can to injure him in the eyes of his master and the public. This reporter has been called a clever colonial boy by some persons, but unfortunately for them he was born within the sound of Bow Bells, and knows more about "All Hot" than he does of horses.

If editors of papers inquired more into the antecedents of their special correspondents, the public would not have so much trash and mendacity thrust upon them.

THERE appears to be some trouble over the handicap for the Wanganui Cup. Mr. Hatley gave in the handicap to be published to the morning papers, and also posted it at the Club's official office. The next day the daily papers throughout New Zealand published the official list in which Cynisca and Recluse were weighted at 8st. In the evening an amended handicap was sent to the papers giving Cynisca's weight as 8st 9lb, and Recluse's 8st 2lb. A local appeared in the *Chronicle* the following morning confirming this alteration, saying at the same time that the error was caused by the handicapper in copying the weights from a rough copy. This is altogether a too flimsy excuse. Mr. Hatley of all people in the world ought to know that when a handicap is once published it cannot be altered. No one will believe the mistake did occur in the transcribing of the notes, but in the fact of the handicapper finding out that he had made a mistake. Mr. Hunter, it is stated, is going to test the matter. What the issue of the case will be in New Zealand it is hard to say, but if the case was brought before the Newmarket Jockey Club there is not the slightest doubt that the verdict would be: The handicap must stand as published, unless it was a printer's error.

THE TURF.

[BY OLD TURFITE.]

THE Dunedin J.C. Autumn Meeting takes place on the 25th, 26th, and 28th inst. Some years ago the Dunedin Cup was second to none in New Zealand. Great interest and a large amount of betting took place long before the day of the race, and one was able to win a good stake at a comparatively small outlay. Alas! those times are passed. The totalisator monopolises all the betting—it has driven the bookmakers and the best horses to Australia. The consequence is, that the New Zealand racecourses can only be looked upon as public trial grounds for the clever owners, while the small ones, who have neither the enterprise or money to send their horses across the water, have to content themselves with the crumbs. The fact of the matter as it now stands, is that racing here would never pay if it was not for the Australian market. Racing will never pay an owner unless he can back his horses to win a good stake. At the present time I do not believe that a thousand pounds could be won over any race unless one was prepared to take a short price with no prospect of hedging. Before long it will also tell on breeders of blood stock. But to return to the Dunedin Meeting. The Cup is the principal race. For this event there will be about eight starters. Crackshot, 8st 10lb, heads the list. With this weight he would require to be quite as fit as when he won the Auckland Cup; but his running at Wellington, and from subsequent information that I have received, he is pounds below that form, so he may be passed over. Hilda, 8st 9lb, has been made favourite ever since the weights first appeared; in fact, the public were rushing over one another to get on, but she is no favourite of mine. Though she is undoubtedly a good mare, she has never convinced me that she can get a distance in a fast run race, therefore I only expect her to run into a place, and as such she would be a good investment. Occident, 8st 9lb, is very well handicapped, and if one was sure that he was quite fit and well, he would about win, but then there is a doubt, though by the day he might be all right. Freedom, 8st 3lb, is a great fancy of mine, though he has

never proved that he can get two miles and a distance, there is no reason, either on the score of breeding or the way he has run, that he should not do so. No line can be taken through his running at the C.J.C. Summer Meeting, as in the first place he was short of work; secondly, he was jammed on the rails, and his jockey broke a stirrup leather. In the spring he showed his liking for the Forbury course, so in this instance I cannot pass him over. Wolverine, 8st, though he won the New Zealand Cup, has now a very different weight to carry, and from what I can learn, he is not the same horse as he was in the spring. Crutchfield, 7st 8lb, may be passed over. Prime Warden, 7st 3lb, won the Midsummer Stakes easily enough from Freedom, but from what has been brought under my notice, I think that was a false run race. He is, however, an improving colt, and has been well backed, still I do not fancy him or any of his breed. Reprisal, 7st 2lb, is a nice little colt, but will never get the distance. The others I pass over, and doubt if they will start. Being at a distance away from the scene of action, I am obliged to rely on others for information, so if I am wrong I cannot help it, but the chances are the winner will turn up in either FREEDOM, OCCIDENT, or HILDA, and I take them in the order named.

THE Publicans' Purse, six furlongs, is the only other race that the public, not on the spot, take any interest in. It is not my intention to wade through them *seriatim*, as sprint races so much depend upon the start. The first one that strikes you as well in is Cissy, 8st 12lb, as speed is more her forte than staying, though in moderate company she has proved that she can get a mile and a half. The next is Quadrant, 8st 2lb. He is well handicapped, and if he comes fit and well to the post, it will take a smart one to beat him. Ruby, 7st 13lb, has more than once shown that she can gallop this distance, but I think the company too good for her. Prime Warden, 7st 8lb, has a great show at the weight, but if he has been trained for the Cup distance, it will militate against his show here. Reprisal, 7st 8lb, is a smart colt over this distance, but the chances are that he will get a gruelling in the Cup, as few New Zealand jockeys drop their hands when their horse is beat, but punish them to the end. No wonder there are so many "curs" in the colony. Fiesole, 6st 12lb, on her running at the C.J.C. Meeting, should have a show, but her running at Takapuna was so disgracefully bad that it is a wonder that her owner paid her expenses to Dunedin. However, from what I can learn, it is more than likely Major George's pair will pay their expenses on the second or third day, so Fiesole's Takapuna form must be ignored. In summing up the chances of the different horses, QUADRANT, CISSY and RUBY read the best, but Lady Bell might upset all calculations. The only other race to touch upon is the Stewards' Purse or Welter Handicap. As many of the horses entered have previous engagements, it is no use to go through them, but it strikes me forcibly that Major George expects to place this race to his credit by the aid of Fiesole.

THE second forfeit for the Newmarket Handicap and Australian Cup were made last Thursday. We will first of all take the Newmarket Handicap, to be run on Saturday, February 28th. There are forty-four left in. Of these over thirty are most likely to face the starter, so it is no easy matter for those on the spot to pick the winner or even a placed horse, therefore how much more difficult for anyone at a distance. The principal ones that have dropped out are Cuirassier, Don Giovanni, Annesley, Litigant, Elsie, Mikado II., Silver Prince, Propounder, Enuc, Wilga, and the usual lot at the tail-end of the handicap. When the first forfeit was declared I selected the following six as those I thought best in the handicap:—Too Soon, Bendigo, Merriment, Wilga, Conceit and Marvel. If these Wilga is the only one that has dropped out, so I am left with five. I see no reason to alter my opinion that they have the best chance of winning; but as the bookmakers now-a-days do not give as many against the field as they used to in the good old days before the machine came into vogue, and as one cannot back the whole five, I suppose it is my duty to try and separate them. Now, this is a difficult matter,

as the Oakleigh Handicap is run to-day, and as several of the horses are engaged in that race (which is well worth winning) they may prefer going for it. Should one of them win they will have to put up the extreme penalty, which would greatly discount his chance. Marvel, 8st 13lb, is looked upon as a remarkably fast colt, and has been kept for a long time on purpose to land a big coup, and from what can be ascertained this will be his journey. Bendigo, 8st 6lb, has proved himself on more than one occasion to be a very fast horse. As he belongs to the Hon. D. Wallace one is sure to have a square run for one's money. Too Soon, 9st, is also a speedy horse, but unfortunately he is a roarer, and if the day is at all damp or the ground heavy going it will be greatly against him. Conceit, 6st 8lb, is the property of Mr. "Highborn" Forester, who is so fond of astonishing the public with outsiders. Conceit, 9st 7lb, at Randwick the other day, cut out the six furlongs in 1min. 18sec. If none of these five incur a penalty I shall expect one of them to furnish the winner, but to reduce them I like the chances of Marvel, Bendigo, and Merriment the best, though I intend to have an outside shot on Conceit.

THERE are twenty-three left in the Australian Cup, so the field will number in all about seventeen. Not many of the principal horses have dropped out this time, Melos, Cuirassier, and Annesley being the chief ones. My readers must have been prepared for Melos being struck out, as I warned them some time ago that he was not doing as well as he should be, while Cuirassier's defection does not the least surprise me, as from the time he first went over I maintained that he would never stand a severe preparation. At the time I selected six for the Newmarket Handicap I did the same for the Australian Cup, the whole of which are now left in—Corroze, The Spot, Enuc, Gibraltar, Megaphone, and Highborn. Of these I prefer the three first in the order named. I shall have another chance of writing on this race next week, as it is not run until March 3rd, and I may get information that will cause me to alter my mind.

I TAKE the following from "Augur" of the *Australasian*:—"The Nashville Autumn Meeting lasted over twenty-three days. It is said that there were too many short races and selling races to suit a real sportsman. There was one funny incident in connection with this meeting. A certain jockey had been engaged to ride a horse, and the bookmakers kept peppering him. Suddenly the owner of the horse decided to change his jockey, and the odds immediately shortened. The horse won. Then the bookmakers deputed one of their number to wait upon the stewards to request them to declare all bets made on the horse, before the jockeys were changed, off. Naturally, the request was refused. Methinks, when the owner of the horse saw how his horse was being laid against, smelt a rodent. A correspondent of the *Spirit* states that there was some roping at the meeting. 'It is possible,' he says, 'that this or that horse will not run his best after he takes a squint at the bookmakers' slates and finds he is a red-hot favourite. They can shunt even in America, but they have a rule which should be introduced everywhere where racing is in vogue. The stewards can, if they think there is sufficient grounds, change a jockey at the last moment. Here is the rule which obtains to the Western States: The judges in their discretion, where fraud is suspected, shall have the right to put upon a horse a rider selected by them, and shall have the right to place the horse in charge of any trainer they may select. Any owner or trainer who refuses to permit a rider or trainer to be changed as herein provided, and any trainer or rider who refuses to take charge of or ride a horse to the order of the judges, shall be ruled off. Substitute the word stewards for judges, and there you are.'"

If the different clubs in the colonies were to pass such a rule, what a commotion there would be among owners and trainers. The difficulty would be to detect anything when the totalisator is worked, as the machine tells no tales, and backers only find out they are let in when the race is run. The ring, however, is so sensitive, it generally lets a practised person detect when there is a stiff one, especially if