

Mr. W. H. Keith had a win at Sandown Park (Melbourne) on May 19th with Natator's son Whiteman, who put up rost in the Steeplechase of 80 sovs., about two miles and a half, and won handsomely from a field of four, one of whom was the ex-New Zealander Waiter, 11st 11lb. Pretender was second with 6st 9lb to Tyras, 6st 12lb, in the Selling Race, 5 furlongs; and Whiteman's stable mate Maribyrnong was unplaced in the Selling Hurdle Race, one mile and a half.

Mr. W. Finlison, the Dunedin bookmaker, will leave for Melbourne this week on a short visit. He takes over with him the bay gelding Cocksfoot, a useful sort of horse that I have seen running at country meetings in Canterbury. Cocksfoot has plenty of pace, albeit there is reason to doubt his staying abilities, and I will wager he acquits himself creditably on the other side of the water. He is quite as good class a horse as, or perhaps better than, many of the nags that have lately left New Zealand for Australia.

Messrs. Hearn and Kennedy, who won so many races with that sterling little horse Recluse, are reported to be retiring from the racing arena. Their stables at Momohaki have been leased by W. Butler. This nephew of Mr. P. Butler has for some time past been residing in the Taranaki district, and when I last saw him he was rather different in appearance from the little "Willie" who rode Welcome Jack at 6st 5lb when that horse won the Canterbury Jockey Club Handicap of 1882. Butler is careful and painstaking, and deserves a slice of good luck.

Another exodus to Australia! From Christchurch I learn that Tom Field and Ilium are to be sent to Melbourne next week for purposes of sale. If they do not realise a decent price Stratford may race them there.

Brigadier's brother, Tranter, was sold the other day in Melbourne for 140 gns. I hear very good accounts of his first batch of foals, and from what I know of the form he displayed at the racing game in Australia, I should say he was a good but unlucky racehorse.

From Sydney I learn that that arch-imposter Moraine won the Welter Mile at Rosehill on May 21st.

James Webster, who took Maxim to America, says in writing from Sacramento to a friend in California (says the *Weekly Press*): "The party who arrived here in the boat before me with Idalium and Repose could not find a purchaser for them. They don't want Idalium here, because he was not a good performer on the turf. He then brought Idalium to Sacramento to stand the season, and sent Repose to Stanford's to one of the horses at his place. They will not buy anything here they know nothing about. Mr. Mackay knew all about what sort of a horse Maxim was before he got here. \* \* \*

\* \* \* The Cheviots have been taking them all down here. In 'Frisco the racing started on April 10th and they go on till May 7th. Up to yesterday, April 25th, the Cheviots had won six events and run three seconds. They were all two and three-year-olds. This ought to be a good help for Idalium, and he ought to sell now. But they do not seem to think much of the races in Sacramento or 'Frisco, just as we would say Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, &c. The principal race meetings are in New York. We will have fourteen days' racing in Sacramento next month, and then they continue at New York, starting in June. I must tell you that we are very busy now with the mares; there are 162 foals running about now, and there are 30 more to come yet; there are 500 mares including trotting stock. 120 yearlings will be sent to New York for sale on June 1st, and then we shall be a little slack for a bit."

It may not be generally known that Miss Hilda, the winner of the first day's trot at the Dunedin Birthday Meeting, is a full sister to Calista. Calista, who was a real gem of a trotter, is now in Melbourne, but she has not started lately.

There has been a good deal of talk about Marvel's "in-and-out" running during the season now closing, and in several quarters he has been looked upon as "waiting" for either the Caulfield Cup or Melbourne Cup. But his name has not been cabled over in the entry list for either, and we daresay a large amount of money has been lost over him, presuming he has not been entered, as under the rules of betting backers lose if they backed him before the appearance of the nominations. With him out of the way, what will be top weight in both Cups? Strathmore most probably, but we should say that the absence of Marvel will put the handicappers in a bit of a quandary.

## NORTH NEW ZEALAND GRAND NATIONAL MEETING.

### HURDLE RACE WON BY BELMONT.

THE Auckland Racing Club began their Winter Meeting operations on Saturday. For some reason or other Jupiter Pluvius, who had been away with the keys for over a week previous, turned on the hose on Friday, and the cold, wet weather of that day was continued on Saturday, with keen bleak squalls, accompanied with pelting cold rain. This had the effect of keeping fully half the public at home, and in consequence the course attendance was very meagre indeed, considering the interesting nature of the proceedings. The greasy state of the ground at the totalisator end of the grand stand, owing to the traffic, was, as the day wore on, very difficult for visitors to negotiate, and there were several spills. The struggles of investors returning from the machine in attempting to get up this little incline were simply ludicrous at times, and caused much amusement to certain of the onlookers. If a few concrete steps were placed just at this point greater comfort would result to the patrons of the paddock and grand stand. This by way of a gentle hint.

The unpropitious state of the weather, and the poor field that started for the Hurdle Race, rather marred the pleasure of the afternoon. It was very unfortunate that after more than a week of fine weather it should have just broken up when it did, and thus rob pleasure-seekers of a luxury they had been keeping stored up.

Proceedings opened with the Maiden Steeplechase of 80 sovs., 2½ miles, for which Commotion, 11.12, Chance, 11.12, Somnambulist, 11.9, and Tim, 11.9, were weighed out. Chance, as usual, dashed off with the lead, followed by Commotion and Somnambulist. The last-named was first over the water jump, but was displaced just past the stonewall going out on to the course proper. From this out Chance forged ahead and Somnambulist fell back, so that Chance must have been fully twenty lengths ahead of Commotion. Coming down the hill Commotion made a forward move, and was only a few lengths away at the entrance to the course proper. The sod wall was safely negotiated, but Chance made such a wild leap at the first fence of the double that the second one was too much and brought him down, thus ruining his chance. Commotion was now in charge, and Somnambulist set sail, slightly improving his position all round the back stretch and up the hill. Coming down the hill for home he gained a little, and all the way up the straight also, but he could not get nearer to Commotion than about three lengths. Tim was never in the hunt. Commotion and Somnambulist were the only horses placed.

All the horses on the card except Yattaghan were saddled up for the Winter Welter Handicap of 60 sovs., 1 mile. After some little delay Mr. Cutts got his eleven starters away to a fairly even start. Rataplan rushed away at a great bat, followed by Vieux Rose, who passed him before many hundred yards were traversed. Brigade displaced Vieux Rose from the lead at the four furlong post, but entering the straight Durus had overtaken Brigade, and here Fiesole's forward move caused shouts for her victory, but it was very transitory. Durus was still pegging away, and Warrior had shot out from the ruck, as also had Ida. Before the Derby stand was reached Warrior had things safe, and Ida put in a bid for victory, but she could not beat Durus, who ran a grand race throughout, although unable to overtake Warrior, who won by about a length and a half, Ida being third, half a length off. Warrior paid the largest dividend of the day, viz., £15 8s. The other starters in the race were Leorina, Fiesole, St. Michael, Vieux Rose, Brigade, Stamford, Stranger and Rataplan. The time, 1min. 52½sec., must be considered good when the heavy weights and heavy course are considered.

The G. N. Hurdle Race of 250 sovs., 2 miles, was a bitter disappointment to many, who quite expected a dozen starters, but when the numbers went up only six appeared, viz., Couranto, 12.0; Lonely, 10.6; Fabulous, 9.9; Tupara, 9.8; Belmont, 9.5; and Never Miss, 9.0. Never Miss rushed to the front at the start, and next came Belmont, Fabulous and Couranto. Never Miss, Tupara and Belmont kept well together on the first round, first one and then another

being at the head of affairs. Couranto lay in a handy fourth position all through until nearing the six-furlong post, when he took third place to Never Miss and Belmont. At the half-mile post Belmont went up to Never Miss, and Couranto with his heavy load crept a little closer, but from there to the judge's box Belmont held his own, catching the judge's eye about two lengths in front of Couranto, who managed to wear down Never Miss and beat him by only a head. Couranto was the favourite on the machine, Belmont and Lonely being about equal second favourites. The win was a very popular one, as Belmont's owner, Mr. J. Roulston of Pukekohe, has the name of being a man of the utmost integrity in the racing world and always goes to win. Couranto's performance was a most meritorious one considering the nature of the going.

The next item on the bill of fare was the Selling Steeplechase. This event calls for little comment, as it simply resolved itself into a match between Hurricane and Kate, the former winning by about eight or a dozen lengths. "Old Evergreen" was sold to Mr. M. Corcoran for £26. Of the others engaged in the race only Prospector finished.

Five was the number sent out for the Maiden Hurdles. Stepper was the favourite, with Hopeful Kate next in request. Hopeful Kate led during the early part of the journey and then Onslow dashed off with a great run, but it was of short duration. At the three-quarter mile post Hopeful Kate was showing Onslow and Scaltheen the road. Immediately afterwards the favourite moved up and got into second place at the cutting. Hopeful Kate led into the straight and raised the hopes of her backers to boiling point, but Stepper came with a powerful rush at the last hurdle, caught the leader, and won by about a length and a half. Hopeful Kate second and Onslow a poor third.

Only four started in the Ladies' Bracelet, viz., Leorina, 12.2, Yattaghan, 10.10, Ida, 10.10, and Rataplan, 11.13. Ida, with Mr. E. D. O'Rorke up, was made favourite, but could only get third to Leorina and Yattaghan after an uninteresting contest. The old mare rewarded her backers with a substantial dividend of £4 odd.

This concluded the day's programme.

### SECOND DAY.

[BY SIR LAUNCELOT.]

### GREAT NORTHERN STEEPLCHASE WON BY SHILLELAGH.

It is many years since I attended a race meeting at Eilerslie, and I find great changes during that time; for it is now 13 years come next Boxing Day since I participated in the sport on the A.R.C.'s course. Since then the Auckland Racing Club's ground has of course undergone a great metamorphosis, which tends to prove the great hold the game of racing has on the affections of the Auckland public. I missed Saturday's racing, for I did not arrive here from the South till Sunday, and with only Monday's racing to guide me it would be hardly fair for me to at present give my readers my impression of sport in Auckland, and I will reserve an article on that subject till after I have assisted at the Pakuranga Hunt Club's tryst on Saturday. However, I will now proceed to comment on the most salient features of the proceedings on Monday, when I witnessed one of the most delightful day's sport it has been my lot to participate in.

First of all then let me say that the weather was beautifully fine; the attendance, I was told on good authority, quite up to the average; and the two steeplechases in particular were of a most interesting nature. It was not a very promising commencement to find all but three eliminated from the Hunters' Welter Handicap, which title by the way is a thorough misnomer. Tulloch was a slightly better favourite than Stranger, St. Michael being comparatively neglected. Tulloch made the running for half the journey when Stranger headed him, and going on won comfortably. The winner was piloted by Mr. E. D. O'Rorke, who purchased him after the Wanganui Steeplechase Meeting. He is by St. Clair, a son of Day Dawn, and not the Hon. G. McLean's horse of that name. He is a nuggetty but rather rough looking gelding, that looks like furnishing into a very useful cut-and-come-again kind of nag,