

Coming Events.

[BY SIR LAUNCELOT.]

TAKAPUNA JOCKEY CLUB'S SUMMER.

MR. KNIGHT has issued his handicaps for the two principal events of this meeting, which comes off on January 28th and 30th, and they will be found in another column. Owners are reminded that acceptances are due to-morrow week, the 20th inst.

The Takapuna Cup, of a mile and a half, is headed by Impulse at 8.12, which at first blush may seem rather hard on the little fellow, but then Mr. Knight could not very well have commenced with anything else. In the A.R.C. Handicap, of the same distance, Mr. Evett made Morion concede 3lb to Impulse, who finished second to Crackshot. Mr. Knight now makes Impulse give Morion 2lb, thus allowing Mr. Bobbett's horse 3lb from Impulse on previous running. This seems to me equitable. I think, though, if Mr. Knight had brought Pinfire up another 2lb, thus giving him 8.7, it would have improved the appearance of the handicap. Regel I do not care for, but Ingorina at 8.0 has a chance. Coal-scuttle—heavy going and all given in—ran so badly in the A.R.C. Handicap with only 7.0 that I don't see where her show comes in now with 7.12, and Lottie at the same weight is very harshly used. There are no less than five nags in at 7.8, and these are Ida, Stranger, Como, Tulloch, and Tit, and of the lot I like Ida best, but I cannot say I am very partial to any of them. At 7.6 Glaucus has a decent show. Lady Belle and His Worship are each handicapped at 7.4, and leaving the mare alone I will devote my attention to His Worship. A good many people look on him as the pick of the handicap, but I must say I cannot see why. He has already notoriously shown himself a non-stayer, and while I believe that with proper handling he is a brilliant colt, up to a mile, I doubt his capacity to stay a mile and a-half. He might, however, I am free to admit, have been put up another 3lb. I don't care for Master Pat at 7.0, but Waltzer at the same weight commends himself to me, even although he did not "waltz" along well at Ellerslie. Warrior, 6.8, and Sir Roland, 6.7, should on previous form find the distance outside their compass. The three I look to to supply the winner are Impulse, Pinfire, and Ingorina, with Ida for an outsider.

The Handicap Steeplechase, about three miles and a half, appears to me a carefully compiled production on the whole. The Napierite, Aorere, who ran so well at the A.R.C. Summer Meeting, has the post of honour at 11.10, and as he has not been taken back to Napier I presume his owner intends to have a cut in with him. Hopeful Kate, 11.6, has shown a partiality for the course before now, and at level weights I prefer her to Fishmonger, though the latter is not unduly weighted. Ingarangi, 11.0, has only recently been taken up after a spell, and is therefore hardly likely to do himself justice. Belmont, 10.5, will find the journey a bit too far, but I like the show possessed by Yum Yum at 10.2. Going lower down the list I stop at Carronade, 9.12, and Deceiver, 9.12. But I shall take the top weights, Aorere and Hopeful Kate, and Yum Yum as possessing the best chances of success at the time of writing.

WELLINGTON CUP.

MR. EVETT'S Wellington Cup weights made their appearance in time for publication in the last issue of the SPORTING REVIEW. Even though there is a terrible lot of rubbish engaged, I fancy the handicapper commenced 2lb too high. In my opinion if he had given Merganser 9.3 instead of 9.5, and had taken Boulanger down 3lb or 4lb, it would have been more equitable. Merganser, however, has been scratched for all engagements at the meeting, her owner presumably intending to have a go at the Victoria Racing Club's Autumn Meeting, where she is engaged in the Newmarket Handicap. Her defection leaves Boulanger at the head of the list, and although, as I have said, I think he might have had a little less, I am not prepared to write him out of it, because, as far I can see, the field will be weak. Boulanger, up to the present season, though showing himself to be a brilliant horse up to a mile and a quarter, did not seem to relish the task of getting further than that, but he rather unexpectedly stayed out the New Zealand

Cup distance so far as to get into a place with 8.4 up. A knock, however, debarred him from starting again at the C.J.C.'s meeting, so we are left in ignorance as to his prospects and present condition. But if he be landed fit and well at the post I shall have him on my side. Crackshot, 9.3, reads well to me. We have so recently seen him win at a mile and a half with 3lbs less up that I need not dilate upon that and his recent performances, but I may remark that of those that finished behind him in the Auckland Racing Club Handicap, which is run over the same distance as the Wellington Cup, Loch Ness is the only one at present engaged, and Crackshot is asked to give Mr. McKinnon's horse 27lb as compared with 24lb in the A.R.C. Handicap, which is, I think, about as perfect a handicap as Mr. Evett ever made. On these figures it is "heads and tails" between the pair. I have a great liking for the chance of Prime Warden at 9.0, and I don't think Mr. Evett could well have been blamed if he had put another 3lb on Sultan's brother. Last season Prime Warden carried 8.2 to the front in the C.J.C. Great Autumn Handicap, one mile and a half, beating Palliser 7.10, Merrie England 8.13, Boulanger 8.10, Crackshot 8.9, Kulnine 7.9, The Dreamer 7.5, and Ilium 6.9, and won easily by two lengths, covering the distance in 2min 38 3-5 sec. This season, after running respectably at the South Canterbury Spring Meeting, he came on to Christchurch, where, though well backed for the New Zealand Cup (8.10), he didn't get a place. He fared no better in the Metropolitan Handicap (in which Crackshot, giving him 1lb, was second), but though he got the worst of the start in the Canterbury Cup, he ran a great race at weight for age and finished second to Stepniak. In the Otago Cup, one mile and a half, with 9.2 he was second to Merganser (who was getting 13lb from him). At the same meeting he occupied a similar position behind Merrie England in the Consolation, he giving the son of St. George 7lb. Now they meet on exactly the same terms, which at the first blush seems hard on Prime Warden, but, as Merrie England has shown such deterioration since his three-year-old career, I would be more content to stand by Prime Warden, who as a five-year-old would seem to be in the best year of his life. Merrie England won the Great Autumn Handicap of a mile and a half with 9.1 up, as a three-year-old, but since then his form has been terribly indifferent. Genuinely backed for the Dunedin Cup and other good races, he failed ignominiously until at the beginning of last month in Dunedin he won the Consolation as above mentioned. Though not quite prepared to discard him I expect Prime Warden to beat him wherever they finish. And here I may incidentally remark that Wellington has previously been a happy hunting ground for Prime Warden, as two years ago at this same W.R.C. Summer Meeting he won the Anniversary Handicap of a mile with 7.7 and Welter Handicap, one mile and a quarter, with 9.5, and then, with 8.4, got second to Cynisca, 8.9, in the Wellington Racing Club Handicap of a mile and a quarter. Stepniak, at 8.7, was fastened on as the good thing of the handicap when the weights appeared. Backers may, however, be warned against burning their fingers for he may not have sufficiently recovered from the injury which prevented his coming to Auckland. But be this as it may with only 7lb over his weight for age he does not seem badly used, and if Mr. Evett puts him in at 8.7 what weight would he have given St. Hippo? we may well ask. It was, I think, a good thing for the handicapper that St. Hippo was scratched before the weights appeared. I am not enamoured of Kulnine's chance at 8.4, though I am prepared to admit that Mr. Evett could not have given him much less. Fraternité, who is in at the same weight, was a difficult horse to handicap, because he has not been seen in public since he ran unplaced behind Crown Jewel in the Wanganui Cup, one mile and three quarters, when the mare was getting 18lb from him. The adjuster has given him 10lb under weight for age, which seems to me reasonable, but I would far sooner have the next on the list. Rosefeldt, 8.2, has always, when well, shown herself a good filly, and at the last C.J.C. Spring Meeting, when hardly herself, she ran third with 7.7 to Cynisca, 8.9, and Crackshot, 8.12, in the Metropolitan Handicap, one mile and a half, and with 7.8 also ran up to Merganser, 8.0, in the Jockey Club Handicap, when the mile was put up in the record time of 1min 41 1-2 sec. Rosefeldt is entitled to great respect if well. Hippomenes, 8.2, who

is a full brother to Regel and a half-brother to Paddy, is as speedy as either of these nags, but it is doubtful if he can stay. I shall never forget the way he won the Great Easter Handicap of seven furlongs at the last Canterbury Jockey Club's Autumn Meeting with 7.11 up, beating Kulnine, 8.2; Heather Bell, 7.9, and a field of nine, which included Boulanger, 9.2; Merrie England, 9.2, and Prime Warden, 8.6. He was "as quick as greased lightning" on his legs, and may be said to have won all the way, and there certainly wasn't at all a bad field behind him and, what is more, he won easily by a length and a half, and carved out the seven furlongs in 1min 30 1-5 sec. But I cannot regard him as anything but a sprinter, for a month after this victory, when well backed in the Dunedin Birthday Handicap of a mile and a half (8.4), he was beaten by the moderate Don Pedro, 6.9. His form at the last C.J.C. Spring Meeting showed that he had hardly wintered well, and I should doubt his being brought up to Wellington now. He will be seen to greater advantage over shorter courses later on in the autumn. It will be as well to see how Scott Free and Loch Ness shape at the Poverty Bay Turf Club's Meeting before committing one's self to a definite opinion as to which at the present weights is the best of Mr. McKinnon's pair, but though Scot Free is not badly weighted at 8.0, I prefer Loch Ness with 10lb less. How Mr. Evett came to allot Johnny Faa 7.12 is an insoluble puzzle to me. As the horse is at present out of training and is not in the least likely to race again, the argument does not perhaps much matter, but his owner, Mr. R. McMaster, of Oamaru, who was in town last week and bought the Castor—Bangle colt at Mr. Morrin's sale, could not forbear enquiring how Mr. Evett arrived at his adjustment. Last season, out of six attempts, he only won the Taieri (Otago) Handicap, one and a-half miles (7.2), and the Taieri Flying Handicap, six furlongs (7.10), the best he beat on either occasion being La Rose, and she was giving him 28lb! At the Dunedin Spring he was certainly second to Morpheus in the Spring Handicap, one mile, but Morpheus was giving him 17lb, and when he ran third to Jewel and Conjuror in the Grand Stand Handicap he was giving the mare 9lb and the colt 11lb. Now he has to give Crown Jewel 7lb and Conjuror 18lb! His only other appearance was in the Consolation Handicap at D.J.C. Spring last season, when he failed to give Derby 13lb. Being purchased by Mr. McMaster soon afterwards, he went wrong during the winter, and has not been seen in public this season. It seems mighty funny to find him on the same mark with Revolution, who this season won the Hutt Park Spring Handicap of one mile and a-quarter with 8.0, and only the other day was successful under 9.7 in the principal event at Masterton—Opaki. Revolution may not be of tip-top class, but at 7.12 he certainly stands out as one of the good things of the handicap judged by his recent running. Should Boulanger fail Mr. Paul, I think he has a show with Cretonne at 7.11. It must not be forgotten that this colt is half-brother to Westmere, who has shown such brilliant form in two-year-old races this season. Furthermore, Cretonne was more than an average two-year-old himself, and this season he has shown that he retains his form by running two seconds at the Wellington Spring Meeting, being second to Arnoel (giving her 16lb) in the Grand Stand Handicap one mile, and second to Swordbelt (to whom he was conceding 14lb) in the November Handicap, one mile and a quarter. I presume it was this last-mentioned form that has caused the owner of Swordbelt to scratch his horse for the Wellington Cup, for Mr. Evett only allowed Swordbelt 1lb from Cretonne. In handicapping Dilemma at 7.9 I think Mr. Evett took a bit of a liberty. With 7.0 this horse was second best of the lot that finished behind St. Hippo in the New Zealand Cup. Next day Mr. Henry gave him 7.12 in the Metropolitan Handicap of a mile and a half—a similar distance to the Wellington Cup—but when he came to the post it was manifest that his exertions in the N.Z. Cup had sent him stale, and he did not get a situation. He was also unplaced behind Merganser in the Jockey Club Handicap. He was handicapped for the Otago Cup by Mr. Dowse at 7.8, but he was obviously stale and did not get a place, and was not seen out again at the meeting. While I don't deem him a likely starter on the present occasion, I repeat that Mr. Evett has taken a great liberty with him. Free Lance with 6.10 won the Summer Handicap at the Hawke's Bay Jockey Club's Boxing Day meeting. With 7.7 he now has just his deserts, but he is too unreliable to trust.

Another unreliable party is Retina, who is in at the same weight, and though she may flop up I would much sooner have Thame at 7.7. But it would be as well to know that this mare had come back to something like her three year old form before backing her. North Atlantic and Strephon are both well enough in on paper, but the question is are they at all likely to recover before the end of this month from the indisposition that has affected them? I like St. Katherine at 7.7, but Awarua Rose, 7.6, is on the sick list. Crown Jewel, on the strength of her victories in the Wanganui Cup, Hawke's Bay Cup and Burke Memorial Stakes last season, seems excellently well in, but she has not in any way run up to that form this season. However she has been entered for some of the minor handicaps at the meeting, and it is, therefore, fair to assume that she will visit the Empire City, in which case she should be well worth watching. Captive, 7.5; Queen of Trumps, 7.5, and Whakawatea, 7.5, I pass by, but if the Hobbs Bros. rely on Saracen, 7.4, instead of Prime Warden he may be very dangerous. I have intimated above my opinion of Loch Ness, 7.4. Arnoel, 7.3, and Osman, 7.3, I pass by, and Senator 7.0, has been scratched, as well he might be after his last running with Revolution, when the latter gave him 28lb and easily beat him. Heather Bell, 7.0, cannot stay, and though I'm not particularly partial to Kotuku at 7.0 it must be remembered that the old mare has before now shown her ability to get a nice mile and a half and may have an outside chance. Below her the only one whose prospects it seems to me are worth discussing is Krina, who is a half-sister to St. Katherine, and, like her, is owned by the Hon. Capt. Russell. She has won several races over sprint courses, and might have had 3lb or 4lb more comfortably. Summing up my impressions as to the best in on paper at present I pick Crackshot, Prime Warden, Stepniak, Rosefeldt, Revolution, Cretonne and Loch Ness to supply the winner. The acceptances are due next Monday, so I shall have more to say thereafter.

DUNEDIN CUP.

ONLY a few days after Mr. Evett came into the field with his Wellington Cup weights we had the handicap for the "Cup" for another Metropolitan Club—the Dunedin Jockey Club—placed before us. The adjustments for this race of two miles and a distance were adjusted by one of the best weight-compilers that ever put pen to paper, Mr. Geo. Dowse, and I can only regret that with St. Hippo and Merganser scratched, with Major George's entries void, Crackshot and Launceston not entered, and very few good stayers in the country, he should have had such an arrant lot of non-stayers to handicap as have presented themselves to his purview.

As runner up in two Dunedin Cups, and winner of the last one when he carried 7.10, Mr. Dowse could not but commence his handicap with Occident, but he has not unduly crushed him, but has put him in at a "flattering" weight, 8.13. Mr. Stephenson's Tasmanian-bred one has not been seen in public for some time, and served a mare or two during the covering season, but as far as I know he is sound in wind and limb, and in such a poor field as there is likely to be he must have a big chance. In writing of the Wellington Cup handicap I have expressed my opinion that Prime Warden does not like a distance of ground, and therefore I will not have him on my side. But what could Mr. Dowse in the face of the opposition do with him or with Clanranald (who figures at 8.7) except what he has done? The latter, though showing himself a brilliant horse up to a mile and a quarter, or perhaps a mile and a half, has never got a longer journey; but then the number of stayers in the race is small, and Mr. Dowse evidently did not wish to be caught napping. Though Cruchfield has been under a cloud for some time, and it is doubtful whether he will stand training, Mr. Dowse in giving him 8.0 has certainly erred on the side of leniency considering the way the son of Cadogan and Puriki has won the Hawke's Bay Cup and other good races in past years. If Ted Cutts could only land him fit and well at the post, I would as lief have him as anything else. With neither the winner of the New Zealand Cup or Canterbury Derby engaged, Mr. Dowse had no three-year-old to start on but Vogengang, who may be termed, in a manner, a classic winner this season, seeing that he won the Timaru Guineas. He was, however, upsidest with the best