

gambling. It was admitted (says this censor morum) that the existence of the trotting clubs must depend on the continuance of the totalisator. If the totalisator were done away with, the club could not hold meetings or pay its way. It then preaches a sermon on the evils of gambling, which is calculated to fetch the "goody goodies," but to people of common sense is humbug. It says that the club made no secret of the fact that the three meetings it proposed to add per annum to the numerous list of other opportunities for turf gambling in the neighbourhood of Wellington were to be purely totalisator meetings. There was no pretence of their being for the encouragement of horse breeding or the promotion of genuine sport; they were to be founded on the totalisator, and if there was to be no totalisator there would be no trotting clubs and no meetings.

Now, as a matter of fact, I may say that the club simply took the proper precaution of not entering into an agreement which in the event of a certain contingency they could not carry out. Has the editor of the Evening Post been doing a Rip Van Winkle sleep that he has only just discovered a Racing Club that depends upon the totalisator for the main portion of its revenue? Every man who is wide awake knows that this has been the case with nearly all the Racing Clubs for years, and that all of them would have to draw in their horns if the machine were abolished.

Mr Evett's weights for the Thompson Handicap, which were published on Friday last, have not been very favourably received. It is considered that he has made great mistakes in giving Boulanger as much as The Workman, and giving Krina only 7.12, or 11lb less than St. Katherine after Krina beating her saintly stable companion at only 7lb the other day at Napier Park. My idea is that The Workman 9.3, Thame 8.0, Kulnine 8.0, Krina 7.12, Heather Bell 7.10, Rebellion 7.7, and Sword Belt 7.6, are the pick of the handicap.

The racing track at the Hutt has been improved by the recent flood, and is now in capital order for racing.

The Johnsonville and Hutt County Trotting Club holds its Easter Meeting next Monday. If Dakota were well and in good condition he would have no difficulty in winning the Easter Handicap, but I doubt his being so; and next to him I like May Queen and Rob Roy, both with 40sec. The following are the handicaps:—

Maiden Handicap, two miles (saddle or harness).—Flirt, The Snail, Guarantee, Guy, Speculation, Buckley, Mabel, Nelson, Lulu, Taneru and Logic, scratch; Whakatea 5sec, Dodger 10sec, Porirua 15sec, Gift II. 30sec.

Pony Trot Handicap, two miles (in saddle).—May scratch, Starlight II. 20sec; Hokimai, Ceres and Hickory, 25sec; Folly and Winnie, 30sec; Darkie and Donkey, 50sec; Nellie 60sec, Lady Gertrude 65sec.

District Race Handicap, two miles (in saddle).—Conway, scratch; Whakatea and Mabel, 30sec; Deception and Buckley, 35sec; Director, 40sec; Porirua and Dodger, 45sec; Donkey, Gift II. and Kitty, 60sec.

Easter Handicap, three miles (in saddle).—Dakota scratch, Prince II. 5sec, Fragment 10sec, St. James and Sultan, 25sec; Gold-dust and Granny, 30sec; May Queen and Rob Roy, 40sec; Flirt 50sec, Co-way 60sec, Countess II. 65sec, Speculation 75sec.

Selling Handicap, two miles (in harness or saddle).—Sultan scratch, Gold-dust 8sec, May 15sec, Flirt 20sec; Bob and Snail, 25sec; Speculation, Hakimai and Taneru, 35sec; Director 45sec; Gift II. 60sec.

Stewards' Handicap, two miles (in harness).—Dakota, scratch; Fragment and Prince II., 10sec; Logic 30sec, M.N. 50sec, Hokimai 60sec.

At Tauherenikau on Saturday my selections are:—Hurdles, The Dromedary; Hack Hurdles, Jimmy; Flying, Thalia; Trial Hack, Alma; Easter Handicap, Viola II. first, Violence second, and Thalia third; Easter Hack Handicap, Brookfield; Welter, Mutineer or Dromedary.

Coming Events.

[By Sir Launcelet.]

AUCKLAND TROTTING CLUB.

CONSIDERING that the Auckland Trotting Club's Autumn Meeting is but a "bye" one compared to their big gathering at Christmas time, the officials of the A.T.C. feel on exceedingly good terms with the entries they received last Friday night for their Autumn reunion on April 15—Saturday fortnight. As will be seen by the lists appearing in another column, there are 26 in the Maiden Trot, 17 in the Flying Handicap (for ponies), 19 in the April Handicap Trot, 16 in the Autumn Handicap (for ponies), 19 in the Harness Handicap Trot, 9 in the Handicap Hurdles, and 13 in the Electric

Handicap Trot. I notice that Mr P. Mangan has entered his imported American stallion Imperious for the two-mile harness event, and another stallion entered—one who has previously gained some distinction on the trotting track—is Balderdash. Mr Bridge's trotting stallion Albert Victor is also in the list, and the visitors from other parts of the colony comprise Tommy and Native from Dunedin; Shrewsbury and Black Oats from Christchurch; Otakeho and Storyteller from Wanganui; and Ike and Skittles from Taranaki.

Mr Halstead's adjustments will appear on Saturday.

WELLINGTON RACING CLUB'S AUTUMN.

MR. EVETT has issued his weights for the Thompson Handicap, the big mile race on the first day of the Wellington Racing Club's Autumn Meeting, to which the club add 250sovs. He has once more made one of his flattering handicaps by starting with 9.3 on The Workman and Boulanger. A good estimate this and if the pair were to run a match at the weights I fancy it would be a toss up for favouritism. In putting 9.2 on Stepniak Mr Evett makes him out to be 11lb better at a mile than Mr Henry adjudged him at seven furlongs in making his Great Easter Handicap. Therein he gave The Workman 9.4 and Stepniak 9.3. St. Katherine, 8.9, has after her recent victories rightly gone up in the scale, but I do not care for her chance. Whakawatea, 8.7, has had to a great extent to be handicapped on supposition. I have already expressed my opinion as to his Challenge Stakes chance at 8.9 if he be fit and well, but it will be better to wait till next week to see how he shapes. I do not care for Retina at 8.2, and I think Melinite, 8.0, would be better served by a six furlongs course than a mile one. The Hon. J. D. Ormond's pair, Thame and Queen of Trumps, are in at 8.0, and of the pair I certainly prefer the Queen at 8.0 if she will only be in the humour on the day, but I would sooner have Kulnine at the same weight than either of them. Krina, 7.12, is given an undeniable chance, and she should in my opinion have been placed above Thame, Queen of Trumps, and Kulnine. I think a fairer handicap would have been to leave Thame and Queen of Trumps where they are and to have given Kulnine 8.3 and Krina 8.5. Mr Evett has taken a bit of liberty too with Cajolery, who might well have had 8.0 or a little over, instead of 7.12. The son of Apremont and Flattery is a demon at sprinting when he likes to go, which isn't very often. He and Queen of Trumps or he and Retina would make nice matings at the stud. Cretonne, 7.10, met with an accident recently and may not put in an appearance, and the distance is a trifle further than Heather Bell, 7.10, likes. Revolution at 7.8 and Rebellion 7.7—the latter especially—are put in at a few pounds less than they are entitled to perhaps. Freedom's brother Dishonor, 7.7, is a patched-up horse that we have to know something about yet. Scot Free, 7.7, should be held safe by Swordbelt, 7.6, and Tulloch also at 7.6 has no cause for complaint. I see nothing among the bottom weights that I care for. With the Auckland and Christchurch Autumn Meetings—besides numerous other meetings north and south to give horses an opportunity of showing their form this week and next—I will say no more about the Thompson Handicap now except to remind owners that acceptances are due on Monday week, April 10th.

CANTERBURY JOCKEY CLUB'S AUTUMN MEETING.

THE Canterbury Jockey Club originally decided to hold their Autumn Meeting on Saturday and Monday next, but they have now changed the days, and their racing will be brought off on Easter Monday and Tuesday. The general entries were not as a whole satisfactory, for they showed a good falling off from last year's total, but the Challenge Stakes on the second day should prove a big draw, and as the amount of that stake has mostly been subscribed by owners, the Club will incur no responsibility in connection therewith. With this and fine weather given in, they should have a successful meeting.

Taking the events in the order in which they appear on the card, I come first of all to the Epsom Welter Handicap of 100sovs, one mile and a half. The acceptances closed last night (Wednesday), so I have no opportunity of seeing them at the time of writing, and must

therefore take the weights as they stand. Crackshot heads the list at 10.0, but I'm told by some people who saw him at Napier that one of his legs wears a very suspicious look, and certainly he did not run well there. I pass him by therefore, and Exile at 9.1 and Captive at 9.0 do not commend themselves to me. Beau Nash has before now shown his ability to carry welter weights, and at 8.13 I think he will take a lot of beating. Awarua Rose at the same weight is not to my fancy, but I like Lumpner at 8.12. But I think whatever beats Beau Nash will win.

One of the most interesting events of the meeting will be the

CHAMPAGNE STAKES

of 300sovs, 6 furlongs, for two-year-olds. Each of the seven acceptors is in a different interest, and though a final payment of 7sovs towards the sweepstake was to be made last night I don't suppose that any of the septette will drop out. On public form, of course, Strowan is entitled to most respect, and, be it remembered, there are no penalties for previous wins. There are at least a couple of his opponents that, be he in his best form he will have to reckon with judging by previous running, and these are Mr D. O'Brien's filly Response by Richmond—Bis Bis, and Mr J. Paul's colt Westmere by Escutcheon—Leonessa. Nor are these the only ones in the field that have already won races, for Beadonwell by St. Clair—Dione, and Gitano by Le Loup—Gitana (both Dunedinites) have flashed past the judge in first place. Lake Shell (who is half-brother to Cynisca and Pygmalion), and Crawley (who is by Apremont out of Whakawatea's half-sister Mrs Rawdon), are both maidens, but Lake Shell has run into a place more than once, and Cutts may on Monday be recompensed for some previous disappointments with him. I have already remarked that it is a rather open race, and so it is, but I think the final struggle will be narrowed down to Strowan, Response and Westmere, and even bearing in memory the sterling performances of Mr Stead's colt this season under big weights, I shall take WESTMERE to lower his colours.

The third event on the card is one in which more interest will be taken by North Islanders than in the previous races, because they have several representatives engaged in the

GREAT EASTER HANDICAP

of 500sovs, 7 furlongs. I have gone over the handicap for this race more than once, and with a final payment due last night it is rather hard to gauge the strength of the field. However, I should say that out of the 18 that accepted a few days back there will not be more than three absentees, say Morpheus, Paramu and Tangi Maid. This would leave the following in:—Merganser 9.12 (including 10lb penalty), The Workman 9.4, Stepniak 9.3, Prime Warden 8.12, Kulnine 8.5, Heather Bell 8.3, Lady Zetland 7.12, Melinite 7.12, Swordbelt 7.11, Thame 7.10, Saracen 7.8, Lustre 7.5, Au Revoir 7.0, Ua 6.13 (including 5lb penalty), and Dora 6.8. Half a dozen out of the eight I selected when the weights appeared are left in, and these are The Workman, Stepniak, Kulnine, Lady Zetland, Lustre and Dora, and to try and make a place selection I shall put

Lady Zetland	..	..	1
Kulnine	..	..	2
Lustre	..	..	3

The Kildare Steeplechase of 200sovs, about three miles, has the poor acceptance of five, but then there were only eight entered. Norton, who has top impost of 13.2, went down in a flat race at Amuri (North Canterbury) the other day, (particulars of which will be found in a "turf topic" in another column), but, nevertheless, I shall not be surprised to hear of his leaving the paddock first favourite for the event under notice. From the time the weights appeared I have never deviated from a liking for Magpie at 11.3, and this is the horse I expect to win.

The Russley Stakes Handicap of 100 sovs, five furlongs, is confined to two-year-olds that have never won a race of the value of 100sovs, and is therefore very interesting. This year there are 10 engaged, and Strowan's stable-mate Geraint is top weight with 8.9. Zanella, who won a race for Mr Rathbone at Napier last week, receives her sexual allowance of 2lb from Mr Stead's colt. Then comes Cajolery's sister Persuasion with 8.5, and she certainly is such a handy 'un over 5 furlongs that I deem her capable of beating the pair above her. I hardly see how Token, 7.12, is entitled to give 2lb to Gitano, who I look on as the pick of the lot. If Taranna, 7.8, at all

run up to the form he was supposed to possess before he competed at the Auckland Summer Meeting he should be about at the finish, but I am afraid he is none too reliable. Busybody, 7.0, is another that had a big track reputation, but has signally failed to sustain it in public. However, I shall not be surprised to see this half-sister to Whisper win a good race yet, and this may be the one. However, all in, I like Gitano best and Persuasion may be the most dangerous of the others.

I cannot say anything about the Sockburn Handicap of 100sovs, one mile and a quarter, for the reason that acceptances closed last night, and that several of the competitors have engagements to fulfil earlier in the day and entries for the Grincrack Race of 30sovs, 6 furlongs, which winds up the day's card and the winner of which is to be sold for 20sovs (any surplus to go to the funds), did not close till last night.

There are only two races on the second day with which I can deal, and they occur in consecutive order—the Great Autumn Handicap of 500 sovs, one mile and a half, and the First Challenge Stakes of 2000 sovs, six furlongs. To deal first with the

GREAT AUTUMN HANDICAP

of 500 sovs, one mile and a half, I may premise that there was a final payment due last night and that the race may be affected materially by the result of the Easter Handicap. The number of 13 acceptors on the 18th inst. has been reduced by one by the scratching of Captive. Merganser's Napier Cup win earned her no more than the 10lb penalty she had incurred before, so that 9.8 is her present weight. Judging by the manner in which she won at Hastings and Napier Park, perhaps she doesn't seem overburdened, but I must say that, having regard to the different company she will now have to meet, I do not expect her to get into a place. I have stuck to Stepniak, 8.13, since the weights appeared, and providing he does not incur a penalty by winning the Great Easter Handicap I look on him as "good goods very." Though Prime Warden won this race last year with 8.2, I do not like him now with 10lb more, though I am aware that in holding that opinion I am in direct opposition to several judges of racing whose opinions I have a great respect for. Time will prove who is right, though. Crackshot, 8.7, I must discard after his Napier running. Should Kulnine run a good horse in the Great Easter, his stable companion Merrie England is sure to come into the market strongly for the Great Autumn which he won three years ago with 10lb more than he is now called upon to carry. Be this as it may, I regard him as one of the "has beens," though I am willing to admit that he put up a great performance at Easter time 1890, when, although only half fit, he won easily in 2min 39½sec. Palliser at 7.12 is a great fancy of mine, and as I mentioned last week I have a sneaking regard for Retina, 7.10. Thame, 7.9, is another I've a great respect for, more especially if she be an absentee from the Easter Handicap. I adhere to my last week's quartette—Stepniak, Palliser, Retina, and Thame, and to try to place them I vote for

Thame	..	..	1
Palliser	..	..	2
Retina	..	..	3

Following right on to the Great Autumn Handicap comes the

FIRST CHALLENGE STAKES

of 2000 sovs., 6 furlongs, and 23 made the last payment, but some of these were palpably left in by mistake; Captive has since been scratched, and it is hardly likely that Mr Stead will run all his trio—Stepniak 9.3, Melinite 8.12, and Strowan 7.11. Whichever he starts, though, is pretty sure to be formidable, but I certainly prefer either the three-year-old or the two-year-old to Melinite. Cajolery, 9.3, is a speedy 'un, but is too uncertain to trust, albeit if he take into his head to go on the day neither the weight nor the distance will stop him. However, I think The Workman will beat both Stepniak and Cajolery at the weights. Though Dora won the Oaks with 8.10, she beat a very poor field, and I don't think she has a chance now with the same weight. If Vogengang were in his two-year-old form I would have a great fancy for him at 8.9, but it doesn't seem to me as if he has trained on, and therefore I prefer his contemporary Launceston at the same weight. Last week I expressed the opinion that Wakawatea would be a "soft thing," if he were in his two-year-old form. I am in the dark as to his present condition, but from what I can gather, though