

Sporting Topics.

(By "The Judge.")

Very substantial improvements are being made in the Ellerslie track. The old plough is to be sown with grass, and this should prove a good galloping ground.

The Avondale J.C. have received very fair acceptances for next Wednesday, and there is material for some good racing.

Now that the Autumn Meeting is over, steps are to be taken to convert the six furlong track at the Thames into one of a mile, which should be an immense improvement.

Mr Everett's compilation of weights for the Easter Handicap has come in for a considerable amount of consideration during the week, the general opinion being that the winner is well-concealed. The best treated appear to be Regulation, Marshall Sout, Starshoot, Lady Annie, and The Middy. On form, the latter looks to be the pick of the basket, but there is said to be a doubt about him starting.

The Sou'-wester horse Ngatarua won the Nelson Cup from Benefactor and Coxswain. He was a warm favourite on the machine.

An advertisement of interest to totalisator investors at the coming Avondale Meeting will be found in another column.

Regulation is to take part at the A.R.C. Easter Meeting, and J. Seats will have the mount in the Easter Handicap.

J. Rae goes to West Australia after Easter, and will take The Needle with him.

The American, Mr Barney Schreiber, must have a busy time of it. He has, it is said, 49 two-year-olds in training, and in addition there are 50 yearlings to be attended to, and 90 mares expected to foal, when last accounts came to hand.

It is reported that the insurance upon the English stallion Donouan at the time of his destruction was 8000 sovs. When it was reported to the owner, the Duke of Portland, that Donouan's injuries were serious and painful, he telegraphed that the horse was to be destroyed immediately, without waiting for the attendance of the insurance agent.

Report has it (says the "Town and Country Journal") that the V.R.C. Committee will, at its next meeting, discuss the question whether it is advisable that bookmakers shall also figure as the owners of racehorses. While the assumption presents itself that a bookmaker's interests as an owner and a layer of odds may clash, and that there is likely to be an element of suspicion concerning his nominations, experience has proved that members of the ring invariably run their horses straighter than some of those who, it is believed, regard the turf as a pastime.

What is the largest number of races that were ever run in day? The London "Sportsman" recently mentioned an occasion when there were no fewer than a dozen. Newmarket was the scene of action, the day on which Catch-em-Alive won, and was nearly losing, the Cambridgehire—somebody tampered with the scales, sticking a lump of lead on to the bottom, so that it would register the wrong weight; the story is too familiar to be repeated. The previous afternoon—1863 is the date—it appears that a dense fog rendered racing impossible, and the next day's card was consequently swelled.

It will be good news to many to learn that coursing is not to be allowed to die out in Auckland. A number of enthusiasts have been successful in their efforts to obtain a ground, and a very suitable piece of land has been obtained at Otahuhu. Immediate steps are to be taken to have this properly enclosed, and an up-to-date enclosure will be constructed. The ground which is quite level, is pear-shaped, and will be about 70 yards broad at the slipper's end, and 200 yards wide at the escapes, while the length will be about 480 yards. Mr Tapper is the secretary, and a very energetic committee has been formed to carry out the scheme. Although it is doubtful if the place can be got ready in time for this season, it is certain that next year coursing will be in full swing again in Auckland, for much enthusiasm is being shown over the matter. I wish the venture every success.

Mr J. Chadwick has been re-appointed handicapper to the Waipa Racing Club.

The big event on Saturday will be the Shrub-Duffey athletic meeting on the Domain. If the weather proves fine this should be the biggest affair of the kind ever held in Auckland, for athletics as a rule take no interest in athletics will roll up to see the visiting champions perform.

Canteen is a good deal fancied for the Sydney Cup. If caught in a galloping humour, the grey should be hard to beat with 8st 2lb, but he is too uncertain to be relied upon.

Moccasin has been allotted 11st in the Great Easter Steeplechase, to be run at Orkapingara. Colonel Shillins is top-weight with 12st 13lb.

The St. Simon stallion, St. Ambrose, has safely reached his new home, the Canownie Stud, in Canterbury.

Gladstone is being kept up to the collar with a view, no doubt, to the Avondale and A.R.C. Easter Meetings.

That popular old gelding, Straybird, the hero of many a jumping race, has been relegated to the shafts of a tuggy.

Starshot has been scratched for both of the big handicaps at Christchurch. No doubt the chestnut will be racing at Ellerslie instead.

What a "cake walk" the Brighton Hurdles would be for Spalpeen if he could only be got into his old form. There seems to be very little chance of this happening, and even the 10st 7lb may prove too much.

A double event totalisator will be used at the Wellington Meeting. On the opening day the events upon which it will be operated are the Thompson and Railway Handicaps, while on the second day the two events are the Autumn and Suburban Handicaps.

Wairiki arrived in Dunedin on Monday by the Mcnowai, and according to our Otago correspondent, was looking in very fair condition. Very comfortable quarters had been arranged on the deck of the Union liner for the Soult horse, who should be home again by the end of this week.

Soultfish, who had been doing very taking track work prior to the Thames Meeting, ran very badly at that gathering in his two starts. In his first essay (the handicap) in a field of four he ran last, and never seemed to try.

C. Weal, the Ellerslie trainer, after taking inspiration to the Thames for the Final Handicap, the last race of the day, could not procure a rider at the weight. He lost the services of Ben Deeley through an accident, as the exponent of the crouch style had his collar-bone broken through Elgar falling with him in the Hack Race.

A useful sort of a gelding in St. Tui was unearthed at the Thames Meeting on Saturday last, who races in the nomination of Mrs. Anderson. Sol was made a pronounced favourite, but could never foot it with the chestnut son of "Brookby."

The race tracks at Ellerslie are at present very hard through the long spell of dry weather, and the tan and sand tracks claim all the attention of trainers.

Commenting upon the shipping back of Wairiki to Auckland, the Melbourne "Argus" says:—"Many racing men thought at the time of the accident that Wairiki's shoulder was not really broken, because the horse could lie down and get up; but Mr Wood's diagnosis proved correct. The fracture was an oblique one, near the joint, and where it has knitted there is a bony growth. At the time of the accident Mr Bradley was advised to have the horse put in slings, but Mr Wood was against this. He contends that many horses lose their chance of living by being slung after a bad accident. Mr Bradley eventually decided to leave the case entirely in Mr Wood's hands, and the leg of the injured shoulder was merely slung from the body. When the fractured bone had knitted, it was found that the leg was 2in short, and that the horse could only walk with the greatest difficulty. Mr Wood thereupon instructed a blacksmith to make an aluminium frame something the shape of a hoof, and this was screwed on to the horse's shoe after he had been shod in the ordinary way. With the aid of this, Wairiki can now take walking exercise freely. The shoe, with the aluminium frame attached, can be removed and replaced in the ordinary way."

THE AVONDALE J.C. AUTUMN MEETING.

The Avondale Jockey Club's Autumn Meeting will be commenced on Wednesday next, and if the spell of fine weather keeps up, no doubt a good many will make the trip out to the course, to reach which there will be special trains, and plenty of brakes and busses. The sport will be commenced with the Maiden Handicap, in which the places may go to Seabird, Discoverer, and Nervine. Eight are engaged in the Hurdle Race, which Bellman should win from Irish and Lingard. A good race should be seen in the Juvenile Handicap, in which the chances of Devonport, Foremost, and Anette look brightest. It is difficult to say what will start in the Avondale Handicap, but if they go to the post the trio to fight out the finish may be Alarana, Gladstone, and Strathaven. The winner of the Chevalier Handicap will take some finding, but Discoverer and Air Gun may take most beating. The Pony Race is sure to give rise to a keen struggle, and the three to catch the judge's eye may be Orange and Blue, Girton Girl, and Lucrece. A good field is engaged in the Railway Handicap, and perhaps The Middy may win from Full Cry and Geordie. The acceptances will be found on another page.

The Wellington Racing Club's Autumn Meeting commences to-day.

The Middy is doing well at Ellerslie, and should be heard of before long. At present this colt and Lady Annie are the favourites in the Railway Handicap, to be run on Wednesday next at Avondale.

A paragraph in last week's Notes stated that Mr Rox Woodward, of Mackeytown, had presented Chas. Weal with a useful sort of a jumper, but this turns out to be an error, as the Auckland trainer did not take the horse. It is against all precedents to look a gift horse in the mouth, but no doubt Charlie did.

The Avondale double, the Avondale and Railway Handicaps, have been freely operated on during the past week, the favourite selections being Paratutu and Gladstone coupled with Lady Annie and The Middy. These selections have been backed from 100 to 3 down to 100 to 5.

An American authority in his notes on the horses seen out in that country last year, says that Artful (Hamburg—Martha II.) was the best two-year-old, her principal performance being six furlongs in 1min 13 1/2sec, with 9st 4lb up. In the three-year-old division he gives the palm to Stalwart (Meddler—Melba), who won a mile and three-quarter race in 3min with 9st on his back. Among the four-year-olds he declares for Hermis (Hermence—Katy of the West). He adds that Good and Plenty and Foxhunter were the best of the jumpers.

AFTER THE RACES.

THAMES JOCKEY AUTUMN CLUB'S MEETING.

The Thames Jockey Club's Autumn Meeting took place on the Parawai Race-course on Saturday last, and although the fields were small (no doubt on account of so much racing round the country during the last month), some good finishes were witnessed. The attendance was only fair at the start, but after the first race the public rolled up in goodly numbers, especially the fair sex. Mr E. Hankins had charge of the barrier, and as there was no complaints from the owners or trainers, that department speaks for itself.

Mr W. Ring scored in the Autumn Handicap with Certainty, easily beating Romeo, a 5 to 4 on favourite, who finished second, but being a long strider could not get round the corners.

This is the last meeting that will be held with the present grading of the course. The Club, having secured the next paddock from the Maori owners, intend extending the course from six furlongs to a mile, thus doing away with the dangerous corners. When finished it will be one of the best racing tracks in New Zealand, and the Club deserve every encouragement for catering for the convenience of horse owners.

The racing started with the Maiden Plate, for which Piper was installed favourite, but he was slow in beginning. Lilymea went to the front, and lasted long enough to win by half a head from Pamperia, who finished fast, with Piper third. Sol fell during the race, but the jockey soon scrambled to his feet little the worse for his tumble.

Only two started in the Hurdle Race with Hakaria favourite, but he easily spoiled his chance by jumping into the

centre of the course, allowing Rolf to win by nearly three-quarters of a mile.

The chief event, the Autumn Handicap, saw Mr P. James' Romeo a very hot favourite, but the son of Leolantis had to cry a go to his lightly-weighted opponent, Certainty, who won rather easily, Putty running third.

Three was the number that started in the Pony Race, and after Prince Arthur had bolted once round the course, Mr Hankin got his field away to a fair start. The issue was never in doubt, Storyteller winning easily.

The Steeplechase, always a favourite race with the public, was won somewhat easily by Reckless, who made an exhibition of a strong public fancy in Hylas, while Hinau ran off.

The Railway Handicap had a field of five starters, and the favourite, Liberator, bolted away from the rest of the very moderate field. Pinker had the mount on Mr Hannon's gelding.

The Hack Race was the next event, and was rather an upset for the favourite, Sol, Mrs Anderson's St. Tui getting home easily from the poor lot opposed to him. A very popular win, indeed.

The Final Handicap had a very even lot competing, and every horse in the race was supported by their respective stables. Millie, who is always quick out of the barrier, had the lead from the start, and was never afterwards troubled, Minna and Hector filling the places. This brought a most successful meeting to a close.

The evergreen and genial Mr William Potts (as usual) worked hard for the success of the gathering, and the same may be said of the popular treasurer, Mr Chas. Winder. This is the first occasion on which the Club have paid the two dividends on the mechanical adjuster of the £3. About fifteen pencilers, who paid £3 3s for the privilege to bet, did fairly good business.

TRAINING NOTES.

THE HUTT.

MONDAY.

In view of the near approach of the Wellington Autumn Meeting, active operations are being conducted on the training tracks at the Hutt. J. Prosser has now at work a string of eleven, E. Cutts five, and R. Mason three.

Contrary to the usual order of affairs, Cutts was not the first to set the ball rolling this morning, C. Pritchard being the earliest on the scene with De-foe, who went twice round at a useful pace. The Robinson Crusoe gelding looks well after his successful Nelson trip.

Matuku went once round steadily, and continuing on sprinted home over a fast six furlongs.

Kaharoa (Price) and Signalman (J. Pine) cantered once round and then jumped off at the seven furlong post, registering 1min 31sec for the distance, Kaharoa showing to most advantage.

Black Reynard was restricted to steady pacing over two circuits.

Chryseis finished in front of Stronghold over six furlongs, run in 1min 16sec.

Lissa did strong work over two rounds, being ridden out over the last mile.

Te Kainui, who appears somewhat green, was extended the last three furlongs of once round.

Tetai and Maui ran six furlongs on the outside of the course proper, the former showing to advantage.

Lady Wayward, who is a fine, big, raking filly, did good three-quarter's pace over a round.

Machine Gun, who appears very well, saw the end of five furlongs in 1min 3sec.

Nightfall did once round at a steady pace, and going on ran home fast from the six furlongs.

Lady Lyonors did six furlongs at a good, useful pace.

Levant was schooled over the hurdles, jumping nicely.

Achilles, who had light rugs on, did a steady once round.

Ghoorka did a couple of circuits, pulling hard for his head, while Exmoor was allotted a similar task.

Position defeated Pardon over a fast seven furlongs.

Boris and Flamen, separately, did once round at three-quarter's pace. The latter appears to be a trifle sore.

Ballarat's task was a mile, the mare finishing the last six furlongs at a good pace; it was a good working gallop.

Golden Comb and Veneer covered six furlongs in 1min 21sec.

A number of others accomplished tasks of a light nature.

TUESDAY.

Just as daylight was breaking, Coxswain, accompanied by Tiroha, ran a