

Handicaps for the first day of the Taranaki J.C. Meeting are due to appear to-morrow.

Nominations for the Easter Handicap, Brighton Hurdles, St. George's and Autumn Handicaps and Autumn Steeplechase to be run at the A.R.C. Autumn Meeting are due on Friday week.

It is stated that the Hon. H. J. Saunders, of Perth, intends going in for horse-breeding on a fairly large scale at his place, Henly Park. He has three sires to begin with—Henly, by Malua, Pakaka by Hotchkiss, and Piata by Castor. The two last were bred in Auckland.

Acting on the advice of the trainer, I. Earnshaw, the New Zealand horse Apologue has been withdrawn from his V.R.C. autumn engagements.

It would appear that L. Hewitt refused a retainer of £500 a year from Messrs. Clark and Robinson, for whom J. E. Brewer trains, before he accepted double that sum offered by Mr. George Edwardes. It looks as though Hewitt may command a second retainer if he cares about tying himself down, and rumor says Mr. James Buchanan, of whisky fame, who owns Noctuniform, has made terms with the New Zealand rider.

Though it was said that Great Scot was to be relegated to the stud, the latest is that he is to be raced again next season in England. Speaking of his stud prospects, an English writer says:—"Not for years have I seen a horse more likely to perpetuate the great Blair Athol than this Australian-bred descendant of his, who in many ways resembles the Derby and Leger winner of 1864, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, Great Scott will make up into a typical high-class stallion."

The American jockey Shaw has closed with an offer of £3000 for this season and all expenses, to ride first jockey for Mr. Weinberg, in Germany. Mr. Weinberg last season easily headed the list of winning owners with a total of £36,874, won by 20 horses, who among them secured 53 races.

The Indian Grand National Steeplechase, run at Tollygunge, on January 1, was won by the Australian mare Seclusion, owned by Mr. A. A. Apar while two other Australians in Kipling and Olynthus finished a dead-heat for second place. There were nine starters, Kipling being an even money favourite, with Seclusion at 4 to 1. The other Australians competing were Look Out, Greenstone, Baron II., Aberfoyle, and Lamrock. During the day Australian horses in Footlight, Mistlebird, Lord Harry, Loch Lochie, and Colina won races.

Arthur Birch, a well-known steeplechase rider, was injured seriously at Gatwick, England, last December, and a subscription was started by the owner of the horse he was riding donating 50gs., which, when the latest English files had arrived, had totalled £134.

Chere Ami, who won the Doncaster Handicap at Randwick in 1904 is likely to be seen under silk in England this season. The Fucile gelding, who belongs to R. Wootton, has been racing in South Africa.

The conditions of the Newmarket (England) sales include clauses that "bids must be made in not less than guineas up to 20gs., 5gs. up to 200gs., 10gs. up to 1000gs., 50gs. up to 2000gs., and 100gs. thereafter. All disputes arising must be decided by Tattersall's, whose commission is 1/ in the £, whether the horse is sold by public auction or by private contract during the weeks of sale or prior advertisement.

The right to run a totalisator in Cape Colony was some time back tested in a case which resulted in the machine being declared illegal. The race clubs are fully equal to the occasion, for in lieu of "the tote" they now deduct 2½ per cent. commission from all sums passing through the bookmaker's books and this, together with a stiff license fee, is enabling all the clubs to pay their way. It is furthermore stated that the bookmakers, perhaps because of the lesson taught by their banishment from the race tracks, have, since their reinstatement, being laying more liberal prices than used to be the case.

The Poverty Bay T.C. Meeting takes place to-day and to-morrow.

Handicaps for the South Auckland Meeting are due to appear on Friday.

The Thames Jockey Club's autumn reunion has been fixed for March 23.

The Tasman gelding Discoverer picked up a double at Papakura on Saturday, winning the Flying Stakes and Railway Handicap. Julian had the mount on each occasion.

The Soult—Hotcherina gelding Grenadier (bred at Glenora Park), who won the Trial Handicap at Sandown Park, on February 2, carrying 9.11, is engaged in the Newmarket Handicap at Flemington at 7.8, or 27lb less than he won with, and has not incurred any penalty. So favourably weighted does Grenadier now appear that he would be in great demand for the valuable sprint were there not grave doubts as to his standing his preparation. He has been none too sound for a considerable time, and after his race on February 2, he pulled up sore, and shortly afterwards was a bit lame.

"A.W.N." writes: "Is snooker a game of skill? If so, why do the police stop the playing of it? Suppose four men play a game, each man paying for his own cue. Would that be called gambling?" Common sense would, of course, say that snooker is a game of skill, and if played in the way suggested by no possibility could it be called gambling. Unfortunately, the law and common sense are by no means always allied, and with our present system of swaddling clothes legislation it is difficult to say what is legal and what is not. Personally, I should say that snooker could be played under the conditions mentioned, and that interference by the police would not be justified.

The thoroughbred yearlings recently purchased here by Mr. C. Strettle, of Melbourne, are to be sent to India.

A horse running in Victoria called Vim, by Vengeance from Vindex II., is evidently fairly useful, as he has now won six races without a break.

The Rotorua J.C. Meeting will take place on February 26 and 27.

The C.J.C. have resolved that no time is to be cut to waste at the post through the vagaries of some pig-headed brute who refuses to face the barrier. For this reason Signalman was left at the post in the Midsummer Handicap. Southern writers sum up Sir George Clifford's horse as the most unruly animal in New Zealand. We have one or two in Auckland to whom the rule might well apply.

Personally (writes "Terlinga") I always think that in nine cases out of ten the handicapper is more likely to be correct than his casual critic. When the critic is an owner it is very long odds on the rights being with the handicapper. The former only judges through his own horse."

The Summer Meeting of the Gisborne Racing Club was perhaps the most successful ever held. The totalisator figures ran out to £11,563, as against £9594 for the corresponding meeting last year.

The disappointing Uenuku got himself among the list of winners at the Gisborne Meeting, when he annexed the Final Handicap from a weak field.

Douche is top weight in the Woodville Cup with 9st. She will have to be at her best to win.

In speaking of the operations of the Gaming Act in Victoria, the "Australasian" says:—"The Act does not stop betting. The bookmakers can send out the prices they are willing to lay, and, with the newspapers barred from making the odds public, backers have no protection whatever. The object of Messrs Bent and Judkins in insisting on this secrecy, was, of course, to lessen betting; but supposing that the business is slightly decreased, the gain in that way will not counterbalance the injustice done to those who will bet by giving the bookmaker the advantage of fixing his own prices. He cannot do this when publicity is given in the papers to what is going on. Already a horse is at a very short price for the Newmarket Handicap, but the Gaming Act forbids us to tell our readers the name of that horse."

The pony Lady Nannie was shipped to Sydney by the Victoria on Monday.

The Summer Meeting of the Dunedin Jockey Club commences next Wednesday.

After standing a big season at the stud at Nelson, General Average has returned to Moberley's stable. He will probably be tried over hurdles.

It is expected that the new offices of the Auckland Racing Club will be ready for occupation by the middle of April next. The plans have been approved by the committee.

After having a long holiday the hurdler Khama has been put into work again at Ellerslie.

Landlock has been given a try over hurdles, and shaped very well for a beginner.

Mr. Cleland has leased Sweet Alice to Mr. H. Thompson. This fractious daughter of Soult must have cost the well-known metallician a nice penny since he bought her.

The question is often asked why is it that our country race meetings are not so well patronised by the local district people as they were in the past or the agricultural shows are now? (says the "Town and Country Journal"). The answer is very easily given. A race meeting some years ago was more like an old-fashioned fair so far as shows and games were concerned. Between the race events one could go in and see Black Perry, Dick Hunt, Hough, Chalker, or whoever was the leading boxer of the day, have a set-to with anyone that cared to have a "go," or a couple of locals would "put 'em on." Then there were the dancing booths, Aunt Sally, Punch and Judy show, and the many little games at which the player would have to be more than skilful to win. That did not matter. The people came there with money to spend. They disbursed it in the manner that pleased them best and enjoyed themselves. Now all that is changed. What attraction is there at a race meeting now to the young people, or the old either, unless they are as the majority—thinking of nothing else but what will win the next race.

Had Aurum not gone to England he would have commanded a position in an Australian stud, and probably have done better as a sire than he has done in England (says the "Referee"). He is now to return to Victoria as the result of his purchase by Mr. J. E. Stanley, and will do stud duty in that State. Aurum, it will be remembered, was purchased by Mrs. Langtry, and won races for her in Victoria before being shipped to England, where he did not keep up his form, and his stock have done nothing special. The Trenton horse has a fine record both as a two and three-year-old. His later performances in Victoria were winning the V.R.C. St. Leger and running third in the Australian Cup under 9.3. It will be interesting to note whether he will command any success as a sire after his lengthy sojourn at the other side of the world.

It looks as though a jockeys' ring is not unknown in the picturesque island of Tasmania, to judge from the following excerpt from the Tasmanian "Mail":—"The existence of a jockeys' ring" at last year's Cup carnival was strongly suspected, and rumour hath it that the best interests of owners, trainers, and backers "not in the know" was in more than one instance made subservient to the financial aggrandisement of a very undesirable class of visitors from across the water, not a few of whom are "known to the police" in the other States as rogues and vagabonds, but who on the occasion of their annual visit to this little island take a strong hand in "arranging" races, and who seem to have an influence with certain jockeys that can be neither wholesome nor desirable. It is, therefore, to be hoped the committee of the T.R.C. will this year keep a sharp look-out for "stiff" riding, whether arranged for by the jockeys, punters, or jockeys' employers. The general public finds the money that is run for, and every possible precaution should be taken by the management to, as far as possible, protect the general public from being robbed by a class of thieves, compared to whom highwaymen are highly respectable.

The following remarks from "Sporting Life" should be read by all New Zealand sportsmen, as they ap-

ply to racing in this colony:—One of the most remarkable things which those connected with the National Sporting League had to contend with when endeavouring to organise opposition to the Street Betting Bill was the apathy and ignorance of the matter displayed on all hands, not only by members of Parliament, but by racing men of all degrees. Less than a fortnight before the Betting Bill passed, Lord Downe, a steward of the Jockey Club, confidently informed the members and guests of the York Gimcrack Club that the Betting Bill would not pass. That was on November 30, and now the Royal Assent has been given to the measure. In gloating over their victory, the executive of the Anti-Gambling League, in a letter of thanks to Lord Davey for his share in the work, explain somewhat their insidious method of working, which has proved so successful, and which ought to serve as an object-lesson, and also to awaken those interested in racing to the evil doings of this meddling body of cranks, who, while racing folk have slumbered on, have been steadily working towards the goal they have in view. Thus, in the letter of thanks to Lord Davey, they say: "At the same time, we consider that the omission of racecourses from a Betting Act leaves the scope of any such measure incomplete; but, for this, influences other than yours are responsible."

Just so; any Act that does not stop betting on racecourses is incomplete—according to their lights. But surely this frank avowal will awaken racing men all over the country to the real danger which threatens the Turf. One hears so often the expression:—"They will never stop betting," that it is time people awoke to the fact that nothing short of that is the end of the Anti-Gambling League. And while one party is trying all the time, and the other is just jogging on unconcerned, you never know what can be accomplished. Be very sure, this first victory will serve only to whet the appetites of the faddists, who—like Oliver Twist—are quietly asking for more. Nor is the stoppage of betting the ultimate end of the Anti-Gambling League. In order to refresh the memories of my readers, I will reproduce the memorable sentence which appeared in their official organ some time ago:

"England will never be the England that she should be until horse-racing, and all that appertains to it, is swept away with the besom of destruction."

What have those noblemen and gentlemen who have hundreds of thousands of pounds invested in the choicest strains of thoroughbred blood stock, and in buildings and land for the rearing of the same, to say to this? What, again, have those who have money invested in racecourses to say? And, again, what have the many thousands who find employment by some means or other through racing, to say? Hitherto, the Anti-Gambling League have had matters all their own way, because none of these people have concerned themselves about the matter, and so it has come about that the thin end of the wedge has been driven in; and the opponents of racing are readying themselves to drive home the wedge. This time there will, I hope, be a fight—and it must be a fight to a finish!

Last week there was a wholesale weeding out of the V.R.C. St. Leger list (says the "Referee"). The occasion was the first declaration of forfeits, when, despite warnings in the Press, several were left by mistake. There were 19 altogether, but half of that number would be a big field for the Leger, and perhaps not more than three or four will be found opposing Poseidon and Antonius. Both those colts have been doing well in their preparation, and both have gone to Victoria to be finished off. The V.R.C. handicapper declared there was 8lb between them over the Australian Cup distance, and if this is correct, Poseidon will continue his victorious career on March 2, when the V.R.C. Meeting opens. The shock Antonius gave backers who had laid odds on Poseidon in the V.R.C. Derby by threatening to beat him at the distance will be remembered, and in the Melbourne Cup Antonius, though decisively beaten, chased the other home, and had not been raced into such ripe condition. These circumstances will suffice to make the meeting of the colts interesting, though at 8.10 the Cups' winner looks like holding his own. Banzai has improved a lot since the early Spring; so has Benbow; whilst Booran and Iolaire are more than useful. Anyway, the V.R.C. Leger looks like coming to Sydney and there will be a race worth going to see.