

**Deciding Course.**

Mr. E. J. Honiss' brdl and w d Black-nose (5½), by Goldbeater—Welcome, beat Mr. Martin Taylor's brdl and w b Lady Rosette (4), by Lord Roberts—Rosette II., and won the stake.

Mr. Coombes, who, for the last ten years has acted as judge for all coursing meetings around Auckland, has sent his resignation to the North N.Z. Coursing Club. At the conclusion of the meeting on Saturday, all present gathered, and a resolution was carried expressing entire confidence in Mr. Coombes. The speakers made many eulogistic remarks about the judging at Middlemore, some going so far as to say that it would be the death blow to the sport in Auckland if Mr. Coombes persevered in his decision to retire. In a brief speech the judge thanked those present for their kindly remarks, and promised to give every consideration to the request to continue to act.

With reference to the All Night v. Glenloth at the recent Middlemore course, in which there was a good deal of comment, Mr. H. Wilson, the owner of Glenloth, against whom such verdict was given, has written to the judge urging him to withdraw his resignation, and expressing entire confidence in his ability. Mr. Wilson was much annoyed at the action of a small section of the crowd in hooting the judge, who he trusts will be in his old position when the next meeting rolls round.

Mr. Martin Taylor, the well-known coursing enthusiast, leaves for Sydney on Monday to witness some of the big coursing fixtures.

The Australian Waterloo Cup takes place this week at Moonee Valley, the deciding course being run to-morrow. It is for 64 dogs at 6 guineas, with £75 added money.

The Gore C.C. is holding a meeting on the Gore Racecourse, which concludes today. The prize money is liberal, as the Ladies' Bracelet provides for £76 exclusive of the trophy.

Amongst the many comicalities in the way of queries that reach the secretary of the National Coursing Club of Victoria in the course of a season (says a Melbourne paper), the latest may be cited as one of the most amusing, and, at the same time, a fitting illustration of the views of some people concerning the sport of coursing. The question asked, which was couched in the following terms, came from a country correspondent:—"If a greyhound gives a yelp in the first turn, would she be disqualified on the plumptoon?"

In describing the big Commonwealth Stakes Meeting in Victoria, the well-known coursing writer "Blakemere" says:—Mr. John Caple was judge, but I regret to say he did not give that great satisfaction we generally look for. Was Mr. Caple wrong in any single decision? I don't think so, although I doubted one or two until I had chatted with him on the various courses in dispute, and then I came to the really just verdict that position was the reason of the crowd disagreeing with him. When we are broadside on to the dogs we are unable to determine if the hare be keeping a straight line or favouring either dog; the judge is very much closer to his dogs, and can see what puss is doing; hence the diversity of opinion. If these critics would only speak to and ask Mr. Caple the reasons for his decisions when such are in doubt, I am sure they would be certain that he had reasons for his verdicts unknown to the spectators. This might have almost have been written of Middlemore.

The South Australian Waterloo Cup was run recently at Hill River, and only 32 nominations were forthcoming as against 46 last year. The meeting, however, was a most successful one. In the deciding course Harkaway and Euro provided a slashing spin (says the S. and D. News). The latter showed superior pace in the run up, and was into double scoring points before Harkaway got placed. He then took slightly more than his share of the exchanges which followed, but bringing his teeth into play too soon, was beaten by a point and a half. The judge's decision was questioned by some, but on the other hand many experienced coursers fully acquiesced in the official verdict.

At the last Kensington Meeting at Sydney hares ran grandly, only five being pulled down in sixty-five courses. This is a splendid record.

**KNIGHTS OF THE PIGSKIN.****Some Famous Horsemen of Other Days.**

(By "THE JUDGE.")

To the few of us whose earliest racing reminiscences go back a long way into the last century, the equine heroes of other days always seem, whether rightly or wrongly—and perhaps it is but a case of distance (of time) lending enchantment to the view—to stand upon a higher plane than the horses of to-day. And so it is with the horsemen who rode them. Those of the older school, who witness at Ellerslie feats of horsemanship, good, bad, or indifferent, mostly the latter, are apt to let the mind wander back to other and earlier scenes and to contrast the riders of to-day with those of bygone years, a contrast from which it is to be feared the present school of horsemen do not always emerge triumphant.

Years ago, when riding in the Old Country, I had the pleasure of knowing some of the great English riders of the seventies and eighties, such men as Fred. Archer, George Fordham, Tom Cannon, Harry Constable, Charley Wood, and others. The former, who took the keenest interest in his profession, was at times wont to wax enthusiastic about his predecessors, riders of the still older school, and from him and from many of the older turf celebrities of the time, such as the late Judge Clark, have I heard as a boy tales of bygone days which, although now but a memory, were then full of real live interest.

Taking the horsemen who have figured before the public during the last century and who was the greatest. Well, probably poor Fred. Archer was the king, but it is hard to say, for there have been many "giants of the pigskin" in that long period of turf history. One of the earliest was the elder Chifney, a great horseman in his day, but imprudent to a degree. He died in the Old Fleet Debtors Prison in 1807. As a matter of history he should have ended his days in comfort, for the King made him an allowance on account of his fine horsemanship, but this was handed over to importunate creditors. I have seen Sam Chifney's grave at Hove, a plain stone recalling the fact that below lie the remains of "Mr. Sam Chifney, of Newmarket."

A greater than either of the above was Frank Buckle. He must have been a rider in a thousand; and as straight as a gun barrel. He was to the fore for nearly fifty years, and during all that time kept an unspotted reputation for always riding to win. Five times did he ride the winner of the Derby, and eight times the winner of the Oaks. At Long Orton, near Newmarket, he takes his long sleep, but his record of unswerving honesty and great skill in the saddle still lives on.

Jim Snowden was another fine horseman of the old school. He it was who, in answer to Tom Green's question after the finish of a race, "Why didn't you come away at the bend as I told you," naively replied, "How could I come without the horse?"

Who has not read of William Scott, or Black Bill, as he was generally called? He was a brother of that great trainer John Scott, known far and wide as "The Wizard of the North." Four Derbys and no less than nine St. Legers went to the credit of Scott. He won the Blue Ribbon on St. Giles in 1832, on Munding in 1835, on Attila in 1842, and on Cotherstone a year later. I think it was Harry Constance who recalled the fact that when a visitor went to Highfield when Black Bill was dying he found the old horseman sitting up with a bottle of medicine in front of him, and in answer to the query as to how he felt, replied: "This morning I was all for hedging, but now I feel like winning another Leger yet." Next day he died, and lies buried in the Meaux Church cemetery, in Yorkshire.

Another great horseman of the past was Frank Butler, a rider indeed among riders. He rode Daniel O'Rourke to victory in the Derby of 1852, and next year was on the back of that great horse West Australian when he came home in front of twenty-seven others over the Epsom course. Six times did he ride the winner of the Oaks, the last time on that fine mare Songstress, who won

the Ladies' Race for old John Scott in 1862. It is almost needless to add that Butler was up on "The West" when that champion won the Two Thousand Guineas and St. Leger. He came within an ace of being killed in Merry Monarch's Derby. Mentor fell at Tottenham Corner when in the lead, bringing Butler's mount (Paris) down, and as there were thirty-one horses in the field, it can easily be imagined what a mix up there was. At All Saint's, Newmarket, he takes his long rest, while almost beside him lies another famous horseman, Nat. Flaxman, who rode Orlando first past the post in the Derby of 1844. Also on three occasions did he ride the winner of the Two Thousand, his mounts being Idas, Hernandez, and Fazoletto, while in the Leger he scored the same number of victories. For forty years he was before the public, and never had an accident. Another talented horseman of those days was Job Marson, who was on the back of the flying Voltigeur when Lord Zetland's colt won the Derby of 1850, and was also up on the winner, Teddington, the following year. Marson also won the St. Leger with Voltigeur, Nutwith and Van Tromp.

Coming to the horsemen of a later date there was Fred Archer, "the noblest Roman of them all." A fine finish was "the Tinman's" speciality, and at times in his efforts to win and no more he cut things marvellously fine. Unfortunately for himself he was a rather tall man, and this meant a great deal of wasting to ride the weight he had to. If Archer could have been induced to go in for walking exercise all might have been well, but he never would. As a result it meant physic and Turkish baths, baths and physic, until I have seen him so weak that he could hardly climb into the saddle, a spectre horseman indeed. Archer's first Derby win was on Lord Falmouth's Silvio in 1877, and three years later he followed it up with a victory on the Duke of Westminster's Bend Or. Next year he rode the American Iroquois to victory, and was also on that fine horse Melton when he won for Lord Hastings in 1885. Archer's last Blue Ribbon success was on the mighty Ormonde, the horse of the century, ridden by the jockey of the century. Shall we ever see such a combination again? Archer won the Oaks on Spinaway, Janette, Wheel of Fortune, and Lonely, and countless races besides on all classes of horses. He accumulated a fortune of over £200,000, but some disastrous speculations reduced this by more than half. Still he was able to leave his daughter so much money that, after a long minority, when she came of age not so very long ago she was heiress to nearly a quarter of a million. It was partly the loss of so large a portion of his capital, but far more as a result of long-continued wasting, that caused poor Fred to end by his own hand the most brilliant career in the annals of turf history.

Another very fine rider of his day was George Fordham, who rode Sir Bevys to victory in the Derby of 1879, and was also up on Summerside, Formosa, Gamos, Reine, and Thebais when those fillies won the Oaks, twenty-two years elapsing between his first and last success in "the Ladies' Race." On his gravestone is cut the well-remembered line: "Tis the pace that kills."

Charley Webb was another clever exponent of the art of race riding, who won the Derby on St. Blaise, and next year piloted St. Gatten when Mr. Hammond's colt ran the celebrated dead heat with Harvester. That desperate battle between Wood and Loates, and the great scene of excitement it caused, remains in the memory as one of the most memorable incidents of a fairly long connection with turf affairs in two hemispheres. Webb was a keen lover of a greyhound, and ran many good dogs.

Space, or the want of it, rather, prevents me from doing ought but merely mentioning other fine horsemen of that time, but of those I either knew personally or have admired in the saddle, the best, perhaps were Harry Custance, the hero of many a hard-fought race, including Thormanby's,

Lord Lyon's, and George Frederick's Derbys; Harry Constable, whose skill brought him much wealth; Fred. Webb, a very clever artist in the pigskin; Watts, George and Fred Barrett, Jimmy Osborne, one of the old school and a very noted rider of his time; T. Loates, Tom Cannon, a skilled rider, the father of another good man in Mornington Cannon. These were horsemen indeed, veritable princes of the profession they ornamented. Have we any worthy of standing in their shoes to-day? Present-day turf goes in the Old Country will say yes, and point to a Sloan or a Maher, and possibly they may be right, but somehow the older turfite will always be inclined to give the palm to the riders before mentioned.

In the colonies there have been scores of fine horsemen, but the names which will stand out in the after years are those of Tom Hales in Australia and Bob Derrett in New Zealand. I think Hales was one of the finest judges of pace that I have ever seen. None knew better than he the difficult art of "waiting in front," and how often have I seen him come round the bend at Randwick half a length ahead of the field and nicely placed on the rails, ready to strike for victory at the distance. Those were the days when the late Hon. James White's stable was carrying all before it. Days when the blue jacket, white sleeves, and blue and white cap were seen so constantly victorious on such great horses as Martini-Henry, Trident, Ensign, Dreadnought, and the mighty Abercorn. Hales won the V.R.C. Derby seven times, but one he did not win on, yet the greatest horse he ever bestrode, and it is saying much, was Abercorn. When really himself I always have thought the gallant chestnut was a greater than Carbine. The question has been often debated, and the record is slightly in favour of the son of Musket with five wins against his rival's four on the nine occasions on which they met, but having seen every encounter, my opinion still remains that Abercorn was the more brilliant horse, although "old Jack" was perhaps the more reliable. Tom Hales' name will ever be thought of as a rider who stood above his fellows at a period when Australia boasted the possession of the greatest racehorses and the finest riders in her history.

Of Bob Derrett it may be said that his history is the history of the turf in New Zealand. He commenced riding in the sixties, and he has ridden ever since. Repeatedly has he headed the list of winning horsemen, and he has piloted successfully the winner of every important race in the Dominion and in countless smaller events. Three times has he won the New Zealand Cup, six times the Canterbury Cup, twice the C.J.C. Easter Handicap, four times the C.J.C. Welcome Stakes, seven times the C.J.C. Oaks, nine times the C.J.C. Derby, four times the C.J.C. Champion Stakes, five times the A.R.C. G.N. Foal Stakes, three times the A.R.C. Royal Stakes, the Auckland Cup on Foul Play, the Derby on Disowned, the Dunedin Cup on Fishhook and Vanguard, the Timaru Cup four times, and the Wanganui Cup three times. It would be tedious to go on, for Derrett's wins have been on every course in New Zealand and over all distances. He it was who rode Carbine in his first race, the Middle Park Plate, and after the famous bay had been left at the post he got up in time to win. Truly, although some of Derrett's riding feats are of yesterday, yet his exploits go back over a period of forty years, and his name is well worthy of inclusion among the ranks of the great horsemen of other days referred to in this article.

Racing men in England are awaiting with considerable expectancy the appearance on the turf of the filly by Cyllene from Sceptre, who is to race this season. The sire and dam of this youngster were sold for a total of £50,000, so that the first of their progeny is naturally a precious piece of horseflesh. Sceptre has this year been mated with Australia's old equine idol, Carbine.

Here's an instance of rapid scoring at billiards by Mr. W. E. Stephenson, the well-known player of Christchurch, last week, when playing Mr. Fred Farrell, manager of the Gray Combination, now touring New Zealand. They took the table at ten minutes to ten p.m., and Mr. Stephenson scored 832 points, making rapid breaks of 134 (including 102 off red), 127, 69, 50, 55, altogether averaging about 40 per cue. Mr. Farrell made 169 all told, and he is not bad. The time taken over this remarkable game was one hour ten minutes.