

lation in this island. That an official racing calendar is needed for this colony is generally admitted, but a publication on the lines of those issued in the sister colonies would probably be quite as satisfactory and much less costly to individual clubs. There no monopoly is given to a newspaper, nor is a hardship imposed upon small clubs by an arbitrary regulation. In taking the initiative in the matter the Taranaki Jockey Club is serving a good purpose, and it has the sympathy and support of many of the smaller racing clubs which at the present time are suffering maintenance of the monopoly. That all the racing clubs of the North Island should have to heavily subsidise a paper published in the South Island is a great injustice, especially seeing that in the majority of instances the clubs depend for publicity of their meetings on the local journals, and thus an unnecessary outlay is involved in the subsidy. It is time that the North Island clubs made their voices heard on this question.

BREEDING THE TROTTER.

To the holiday number of the "Breeder and Sportsman" Mr E. J. Gilbert contributes an article on "Environment—the Basis of Evolution and Perfection in Breeding the Trotter," from which we make the following extracts:—"The study of breeding any special species of animals, if done studiously, will bring us in touch with the most subtle of nature's laws. Those who breed to satisfy some fancy representing the largest comb on the cock, or the longest feathers on his legs, or any feature, not in, and of itself, a valuable factor in the usefulness of the breed, can only expect the minimum degree of the manifestations of natural laws. This statement is not intended as a personal reflection on any class of breeders, but is based on the very nature of the work undertaken. The trotting horse of to-day is rounded into a reasonably perfect form of development. The nervous energy, the will to do or die, the staying power to repeat heat after heat, within one or two seconds, is no longer the gift of one or two celebrities, as in the days of old, when Lady Suffolk's 2.29½ could not be beaten, and again when Flora Temple's 2.19½ was thought by many the climax; again, Dexter 2.17½, was called the incomparable, so great his renown that his name was a household word, appearing on our food and drink; so confident was Mr Bonner of 2.17 being the limit of trotting speed that he had a standing offer of \$100,000 for any trotter that should beat it. Again, Goldsmith Maid, another and greater than them all, reduced the record to 2.14. Then came Rarus with 2.13½, each and every one of these animals selling for large sums of money. From Rarus to the present day, extreme speed has come so often, that its value, by reason of its increased production, has greatly decreased. Surely the exploits of the American trotting horse is ever rising into a fuller and more glorious future. We hear of scientific man's victory over nature; this statement is full of error and profoundly false. Man has no victory over nature; man is really to be congratulated when he can sit at nature's feet, and by the greatest effort on his part, grasp any of the profound manifestations of nature. Hence, man, to succeed in the subjugation of nature, must first subjugate himself to her laws, and the man who by nature can adapt himself to nature's laws, will be found in the front rank of what we term intelligence and progression. The great strides made in developing the trotter from three minutes to the very threshold of two minutes, has in a large degree resulted from natural selection, by which types have been slowly changed by environment, which slowly caused the modification in type, while heredity, from sexual selection, gives to the animal fixity of character, form and purpose. Can any student of evolution who has witnessed the great trotting horses from Lady Suffolk 2.29½ to The Abbot 2.03½, ascribe any particular and all propert reason for the great difference in their speed? Environment comes the nearest to covering the answer of any term known to the writer. Environment produces evolution. Evolution is not a synonym of perfection in nature, it is a change wrought by environment. Should environment be in combat with the laws of nature, then evolution will be slow in causing modification of type, with the chances greatly tending toward unsoundness. On the other hand, when environment is in harmony with nature, sexual selection, which is a synonymous term for heredity, slowly but surely fixes a type and character in our trotters both stable and desirable. The sickle was as suitable to the environment of man, when it was used, as the twine binder of to-day. No doubt the stage coach of former years suited the environment of the users of it as well as the palace coach of to-day. The spinning wheel of sixty years ago was as perfectly adapted to its environment as the great looms and complicated mills of this day to

our needs. No doubt that individuals and machinery were equally perfect in their adaption to their environment. Evolution being the offspring of environment, and man's greatest ambition being progression and improvement in the trotting horse, we find its environment bettered. Evolution, rapidly changing the wide sprawling gait of the early day trotters to the close-in gaited Electioneers of the present day. The writer avers without fear of successful contradiction, that in no class of animal production has there been so great an advance in strength, beauty, uniformity, and speed as has come to the American trotting horse since 1880. This is true beyond a doubt; it is also a great compliment to the genius of American manhood. It proves that the breeders of trotters from the first started out on that broad, fundamental ground that all the weak points in the mechanism of this flying machine must first be eliminated. The soundness, both physical and mental, of sire and dam scrutinised by every breeder of any repute. Stallions were not bought or patronised whose dam had any weakness of any character. The breeders laid down the rule that it takes two good ones to make one at the best and then many blanks appear. But soundness alone does not complete and will never produce a trotter. A still mightier factor, that of brain or mental heredity, is necessary, and to secure the great flights of speed now possessed by The Abbot, Alix, Cresceus, Charley Herr, and others, it has been necessary to bring it about by evolution.

Sporting Topics.

[By] PETRONEL.

Waiuku is on his way back to New Zealand.

Taranaki Jockey Club's Autumn Meeting next Wednesday and Thursday.

Hawkes' Bay Cup nominations are due to-morrow—Friday.

The final payment of 5 sovs for the Taranaki Cup falls due on Saturday next, February 9.

The handicaps for the events to be decided on the first day of the Poverty Bay Turf Club's Annual Meeting should be declared on Saturday next, February 9.

The committee of the Auckland Racing Club on Monday issued jockey licenses to the following applicants:—W. Bradshaw, A. Coesel, C. Crocker, S. Dufty, A. Edwards, W. Jones, R. McKenzie, H. Nodder, G. Penny, and J. Penny.

The handicaps for the Waitakauri Racing Club's Meeting, to be held on Saturday, February 16, appear in this issue. Acceptances are due with the secretary, Mr W. S. Morrin, to-morrow (Friday) February 8.

Acceptances for all events to be run at the Papakura Racing Club's Meeting are due with secretary, Mr E. S. Cole, to-morrow (Friday) February 8. Acceptances will be received either at the Metropolitan Hotel, Auckland, or at the Papakura Hotel.

Nominations for the Easter Handicap, First Handicap Hurdles, Autumn Handicap, and St George's Handicap, to be run at the Autumn Meeting of the Auckland Racing Club, are due with Mr Percival on Friday, February 8 (to-morrow). The entry fee for each race is one sovereign.

Mr J. H. Clayton, the secretary of the Stratford Racing Club, will receive nominations for the races to be run at the Hack Meeting on March 18 on Monday next, February 11. The races requiring the attention of owners and trainers are the Stratford Cup, Handicap Hurdle Race, Welter, St Patrick's, and Flying Handicaps. The handicaps will be declared on or about Monday, February 25.

The committee of the Auckland Racing Club met on Monday and considered the programmes of various clubs. The programmes from the following clubs were submitted and approved of: Thames Jockey Club, March 4; Opoiki Racing Club, March 7; East Tamaki Racing Club, March 9; Northern Wairoa Racing Club, March 16; Wakatane Racing Club, March 18.

Cavaliere's name has been whispered about during the last week as one likely to make a bold show in the Takapuna Cup. The Ouirassier gelding ought to be able to make a bid for the honours, for he is well and is well-treated in the matter of weight. Given good going I do not think he will knock Bluejacket out at the end of the mile and a-half.

Sir J. Blundell Maple, the well-known owner and breeder, sends a lot of brood mares to Paris for sale every year, and he has found the enterprise a profitable one. Last month he sent over sixteen lots, and they averaged 570 guineas. Sir Blundell has found it more remunerative to breed and cater for the French than the English market. A majority of the lots were young mares covered for the first time by fashionable stallions.

Some time ago, while being schooled over hurdles at Wanganui, Taplow got staked inside the quarter, and has never got over the injuries resulting therefrom. He was again examined by a surgeon last week, and an operation under chloroform was suggested to remove a piece of wood still embedded in the flesh. It is probable that the operation will be carried out says an exchange. Taplow has been accepted for at Taranaki so he cannot be so very bad.

Final payments for the O.J.C. Middle Park Plate and Champion Plate are due with the secretary on Monday next, February 11.

Monday next, February 11, is general entry day for the Canterbury Jockey Club's Mid-summer Meeting.

The catering at the Takapuna Jockey Club's Summer Meeting will be in the experienced hands of Mr A. F. Stillwell.

The cable brings word that Advance has been backed to win £10,000 in the Newmarket Handicap. The Vanguard colt is now a firm first favourite at 100 to 6.

The Auckland Anniversary Regatta will take place on Saturday, March 9th. Entries close with the secretary, Mr E. B. Alexander, on Wednesday, March 6th.

The honorary secretaries of the Imperial Troops Reception Committee ask citizens—in the event of the authorities deciding on billeting the troops—who are willing to entertain them to send in their names and addresses to the Committee at once.

Entries for the South Auckland Racing Club's Annual Meeting, fixed for Saturday March 9, must be made on Friday in next week, February 15. Nominations can be left with either the secretary, Mr A. J. Storey, Hamilton, or Mr H. Massey, High-street, Auckland.

St Leger had a good innings through his progeny at the Wellington Summer Meeting. Melwood scored twice for the veteran stallion, while Cruciform, Okoari, and Hartmoor each notched a win which adds to the Doncaster horse's already good total for the part of the season concluded. I expect to see more victories to the credit of St Leger before the Takapuna and Taranaki meetings are concluded.

An English exchange says of Sir Edgar Vincent the owner of Screw Gun, "Sir Edgar has already spent enough money on the turf and in buying horses to deserve a turn of fortune, but up to the present the fates have been against him—more especially when Multiform turned roarer; Stoccardo, who on his first running here seemed full of promise, but went mysteriously lame; and his two-year-old colt, Council of Trent, of whom great things were expected, had to be fired and put away for next season."

"Pilot," in the Sydney "Referee," says:—"St Innis, I take it, is now nearly as good as at any time during her New Zealand Turf career. Her condition is very different to when she first raced here, and whereas she used to die away after going three furlongs, she now runs her races right out. In the Fourteen-three Handicap at Kensington on Saturday Indabba was fairly close to her at the turn, but she ran away from him in the straight, and won very easily from Cora II., whose rider might have distributed his energy more evenly. He displayed a lot over the last furlong, but comparatively little prior to that. However, he explained matters to the satisfaction of the stewards. Indabba could have got third place, but was eased up when his rider saw there was no chance of winning."

Some most glaring cases of turf malpractice have taken place in this colony during the last twelve months, and have been allowed to go unpunished, says a Brisbane writer. In a few cases where punishment has been dealt out generally the "boy on top" has suffered, and the prime movers in the business have gone unpunished. It is common rumour about Brisbane that an individual has the controlling, through ownership and other means, of horses in several stables, and is thus able to forecast with almost absolute certainty the winners of many of our races, but with marvellous acumen is able to stand from under when any trouble arises. If true, the authorities in power should leave no stone unturned to alter this state of affairs, otherwise the turf here will suffer considerably.

A curious story is related about the Chesterfield Cup, won by Pumicestone, which suggests that men with such evenly-balanced minds as the late Lord Wilton, are not beyond the reach of superstition. The colt had previously run as by Cotherstone, out of Duchess of Lorraine, and Lord Wilton had not troubled himself about giving him a name. Shortly before the race, however, he received a letter from Lord Chesterfield, enclosing him one which he himself had got from a gentleman, stating that he had dreamed most distinctly that a horse named Pumicestone had won the Chesterfield Cup at Goodwood, and as he could not see one of that name in the entry, he concluded that it must be Lord Wilton's animal, that had not been named. The colt being got by Cotherstone, his lordship did not consider Pumicestone altogether inappropriate, and willing to humour the dreamer's fancy, adopted the name, and saw the vision realised, for, without being quoted in the market, his colt beat Vanderdecken and a large field very cleverly.

One of the little slips to which the bookbinder is liable, brought about a family complication, which has made a young man (says the "Literary World") very sorry for himself. Reading a sporting novel, "The Monk Wins" (Duckworth and Co.), a stirring tale of turf intrigues, bookmakers, American jockeys, and an heiress who owned a Derby favourite, he bought a clean, new copy, and sent it to an elderly and rich uncle, whose health compels him to live in the south of France and renounce the delights of Newmarket and Goodwood. Presently the volume came back, with a curt note intimating that the uncle had no intention of dying just yet, and, anyhow, was not looking for religious instruction from his nephew. The cover of the novel, adorned with horse-shoe and whip, proved to enclose "Thirty Plain Sermons," including "The Passing World" and "In Earthen Vessels," by the Rev. B. J. O. Murphy. The binders had put in Messrs Duckworth's covers the wrong publication.

As Mr H. Hayr withdrew from his purchase of the gates at the approaching meeting of the Takapuna Jockey Club the Committee has decided to offer the gates at auction again. Messrs John Churton and Co. will therefore submit the right for sale at twelve o'clock to-day, Thursday.

The Takapuna Jockey Club will issue a general invitation to the Imperial Troops to be present at the races on the day they are in Auckland, and the same hospitality has been extended to the returned members of the New Zealand contingents.

Mutamataharakiki has been progressing very well in her recent work, and I believe she will be the selected of the stable for the Takapuna Cup. She has a very light weight to carry, and if she can stay out the full mile and a-half she will make a very good race.

The holiday number of the San Francisco "Breeder and Sportsman" is a capital production. It contains some excellent reading matter, many fine portraits of leading trotting horses, pictures of prize-winning dogs, and other admirable illustrations of various kinds of sport.

Mr Tom Whewell, the secretary of the Ohinemuri Jockey Club, informs me that Mr George Cutts cannot accept the position of pony measurer the O.J.C. Mr Cutts already has his hands full, and as he cannot see his way to the work the O.J.C. stewards will measure the ponies themselves.

Daytree has been showing better gallops during the past week. He is one of the horses who has benefitted by the postponement of the Takapuna Meeting. Had the race for the Cup been run last week he would not have had a hope, now his prospects bear a much more promising appearance.

It is stated that Sir Rupert Clarke is dissatisfied with the weights allotted to his horses by Mr Dakin, and that a petition is to be got up asking Victorian owners not to run their horses. The matter can only be idle rumour, for such a course, if adopted, would only tell against the owners themselves.

The frequent and heavy rains of the past few days have not been too much for the training tracks, and many horses have been putting in some solid work. Should there be more rain between now and the time fixed for the opening day of the Takapuna Meeting the Cup race may be won by a light-weight.

Tarragon continues to make steady improvement at Ellerslie, and his admirers for the Takapuna Steeplechase are rapidly increasing. Tim also is going well. Nor-west and Straybird still remain at the head of the quotations recorded on the Steeplechase, and are the favourite selections in double betting with Formula and Bluejacket.

At the monthly meeting of the committee of the D.J.C. (the Hon. G. McLean presiding held on Wednesday in last week) the action of the Waikouaiti Club in suspending the jockey Lindsay for twelve months was endorsed. The donation of the handsome Union Jack by Messrs Speight and Co was acknowledged with thanks. Leave of absence was granted to Mr James Mills during his absence from the colony.

The long postponement of the Takapuna Jockey Club has been the source of much inconvenience to the owners of at least the visiting horses with prospective engagements elsewhere. Tommy Atkins is a case in point. Mr Major's gelding has two engagements on Wednesday at the Taranaki fixtures, and is entered for some of the races to be decided on the second day. He must be withdrawn from some of the Takapuna events if he is to race at New Plymouth. If the Takapuna Jockey Club had held their meeting during this present week the visiting horses would have been enabled to fulfill all their engagements here and get to New Plymouth in good time for the racing there.

I again remind owners and trainers that nominations for all the events to be decided at the Otahuhu Trotting Club's Summer Meeting close to-morrow, Friday, February 8. The programme contains many valuable stakes, the principal trotting race being the Otahuhu Cup, value 100 sovs. There are several trotting events with stakes of 60 and 50 sovs, while the galloping ponies have been well provided for. Entries will be received by the Secretary, Mr W. L. Lockhart, at Otahuhu, or at the Metropolitan Hotel, Auckland, up till nine o'clock on Friday evening.

Mr Evett and Mr Henrys differ considerably in their estimates of horses engaged at the Taranaki and Egmont fixtures. Taking the three accepting topweights in the Taranaki Cup, who are also in the Egmont Cup, I find Coronet 9st, Battleaxe 7st 10lb, and Materoa 7st 8lb. In the Egmont Cup, run over the same distance (one mile and a-half), Mr Henrys makes Coronet head the list with 9st 4lb, Materoa has 8st 5lb, and Battleaxe 8st 4lb. The Burdle Race at New Plymouth is run over two miles, and the weights of the acceptors are:—Troubadour 11st 9lb, Kaimate, 10st 9lb, Whetu 10st 8lb, Waiwera 10st 5lb, Scallywag 10st 4lb, Vanquish 10st 2lb, Tui 10st, Gowrie 9st 10lb, Waylay 9st 7lb. In the Egmont race run over a mile and three-quarters, Sabre is topweight with 11st 9lb, then comes Waiwera 11st 3lb, Troubadour 10st 13lb, Tim 10st 13lb, Whetu 10st 11lb, Kaimate 10st 5lb, Vanquish 10st 5lb, Scallywag 9st 13lb, Tui 9st 8lb, Waylay 9st 8lb, and Gowrie 9st 4lb. Considering that Troubadour's favourite distance is a mile and three-quarters he must be considered remarkably well in for the race at the Egmont meeting, with only 10st 13lb to carry. In the six-furlong race at New Plymouth the acceptors are, Okoari 8st 5lb, Eton 8st 5lb, Scout 7st 9lb, Tommy Atkins 7st 5lb, and Full Cry 6st 10lb; in the Egmont Flying Handicap, run over the same distance, the weights of the above horses are, Okoari 9st 3lb, Eton 8st, Full Cry 7st 13lb, Tommy Atkins 7st 12lb, and Scout 7st 8lb.