



Occasionally we hear it stated that stayers are not found amongst horses that pull very hard, and this may be true of a majority of them; indeed, can be admitted, because pullers almost invariably run themselves out or beat themselves in trying to beat their riders. It is not always so, however. There have been some notable exceptions within our experience, both on the flat and over country. No doubt many of our old-time horsemen could furnish instances from actual knowledge also. Many horses that pull hard, going half-pace, and that have been hard to restrain in their work without using the severest of bits, which sometimes cause temper, are not hard pullers in their races, and even the horses that pull in their races are not so difficult to restrain when the races are run from end to end, as they so often are in these days. Horses educated, as practically all our horses are in these times, to jump away at barrier rise and go all the way for nearly all they are worth in short races, have to be educated to running longer races differently, and this is where trouble is sometimes to be met with. It is much a matter of education. One of the hardest pullers within our recollection was Lochiel, and there have been no horses really more brilliant; indeed, brilliancy was his supposed forte, yet he could stay, and stay well. Like all first-class horses he needed pace to enable him to do so. It was his great pace that stood to him, and aided him in beating so many good ones, as he did over long courses.

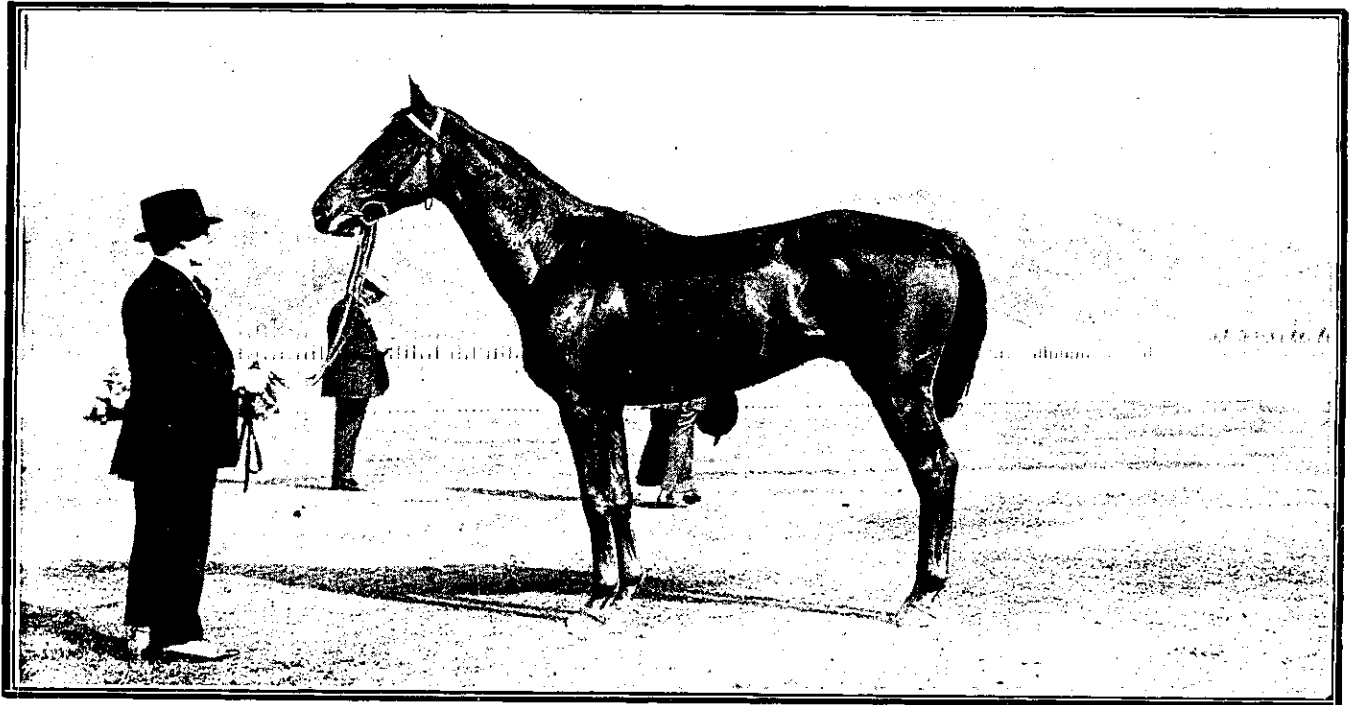
In more recent years Achilles, like Lochiel, would be considered one of the hard-pulling division, and no one would class him as a non-stayer. He proved the contrary, though beaten in the New Zealand Cup by Canteen and Wairiki. In that memorable event Jenkins, who had been wasting, could not restrain him, but a stronger horseman on the day might have done so without so much waste energy to the horse or to himself. Pullers, nicely handled, can stay in front better than behind, but as a rule the very hard pulling horse beats itself before a journey is covered. Harder to ride, perhaps, is the lazy horse that will not take hold at all. For hurdle and cross-country work the non-puller does not commend itself like the one that takes some restraining and has plenty of ambition. Most horses are pullers when the pace is not on, and some of them very hard pullers, too, but their pulling propensities are largely dependent upon the pace they are going. Many a really hard puller in these days, when races are run from end to end as they so often are, never gets a chance of catching hold of the bit until the business of the race is at an end. This is so in respect to short races, but we have often heard horsemen say that they felt sure they would win because their mounts were pulling them out of the saddle before the last stages of the journey were entered upon. We are quite aware that there are all too many that are done going when they cease to pull. These are usually flash-in-the-pan horses with extreme speed and little else.

Really first-class horses are hard to find at any time in large numbers in any country—that is to say, horses of similar age in the same year. In New Zealand, as elsewhere, in some years the good one or good ones have stood out by themselves from the rest in different departments. The stayer, the sprinter, the hurdler, the steeple-chaser, the two-year-old, the three-year-old or the four-year-old has its head, its acknowledged top-notch of each season, or maybe that a season closes leaving some doubt as to which are really the best of their particular ages. We determine these problems by actual result tests on the racecourse. There will be no difficulty in deciding that Desert Gold is the best of her age and sex, and the best of any age in New Zealand. We know that many people, who have seen the best of many previous years, regard her as the best they ever saw

at three years old. We believe that the same stable shelters, in the same ownership, one of the very best four-year-old fillies we have had in the Dominion. This is Tete-a-tete, a half-sister to Bobrikoff by Royal Fusilier, and we would like to see her and Desert Gold in different ownerships racing over six furlongs on a fast course at weight for age. We know that Tete-a-tete can beat any other of her age over such a course, and on such terms, and we expect she will get a bit further now she is getting set and has age. That may depend upon the weight she has to carry, but on weight-for-age terms we would not hesitate in taking her before the proved best in the Dominion over a mile course, and we would not bar the colts. Beyond that distance we suppose that Balboa, who is another of Mr. Lowry's formidable string, would hold his own, and more, with those of his age, Reputation being out of the way in Australia. The question as to which is the best two-year-old is surrounded in doubt, but the one that most people think will come out on top, if he does not prove the best three-year-old next season, is Egypt, full-brother to Desert Gold. He is a sturdy but not a big colt, and there are others that may develop greatly in the spring. Who owns the best two-year-old filly is open to argument also. We can await the decision of the Easter meetings before summing up finally about our horses of all ages.

indeed, do show—form that they never again reproduce, but it is due very often to the fact that they have been raced hard at two years old and up to the end of their three-year-old careers, and that they enter upon the fourth year with their powers diminished, impaired by the too heavy strain imposed upon them at periods of their life when they are growing. That is the tendency of early racing, and the increasing value of prizes for two and three year olds is responsible to a large extent. The temptation to race them over often, or when they may not be quite themselves, must tell against the undeveloped juvenile racehorse. The owner sometimes takes the risk with a full knowledge of what he is doing against the advice of his trainer, or, on the other hand, the trainer may be at fault and advise the owner wrongly, being himself over-anxious to add to his winning account and miss no chances. Risks may be taken by both owner and trainer, who have full knowledge of the chances against them. A victory is sometimes secured where there was reason to fear defeat, and all is well for the time being, but the injury has been done and left a weak spot. In time it is discovered that a promising young one will not train on, the last hard race, injudiciously taken on, has broken its constitution beyond complete repair. It used to be an axiom of belief amongst the most experienced of trainers in the

The classic race, the New Zealand St. Leger, run at Trentham, might or might not have been altogether at the mercy of Desert Gold had she started. It was run in record time for the race, and no mile and three-quarter race has been won in the Dominion by a three-year-old carrying so much weight as Eligible carried in that event in such fast time. Again we have further proof of how fast the Trentham racecourse is. So far as the merits of the solitary pair of performers are concerned, the race was truly run, and people can accept now as conclusive the form as between Mr. W. G. Stead's gelding and Mr. G. D. Greenwood's consistent but unfortunate Nones. Desert Gold's inclusion in the race would have made it more interesting, and fit and well, as she appears to be, she would no doubt have won handily enough, as she did the North Island Challenge Stakes for a second time, though she would have had to do a record to beat Eligible. This gelding stays, undoubtedly a characteristic of the family he comes from. His brother Bon Ton won three years before, and Boniform has thus left two winners, and his sire, Multi-form, also left two. His grandsire, Hotchkiss, claimed one winner. The pity is that there were only two starters. Fortunately, with Desert Gold out, Eligible and Nones were the next best of their age in New Zealand.



MR. J. PARSON'S CH G OXENHOPE, WINNER OF THE THOMPSON HANDICAP AT TRENTHAM.

The announcements that Desert Gold would not be a starter in the Trentham Gold Cup and later that she would not compete in the N.Z. St. Leger came to some people as eleventh-hour surprises, and robbed those races of expected interest. Desert Gold was so handily mistress of the situation when she won the C.J.C. New Zealand Derby and Oaks, and A.R.C. Great Northern Derby at Ellerslie and the other races at the same meeting, that many racegoers thought Mr. Lowry would be desirous of adding a two-mile event to her scroll of fame, and also of giving her every favourable opportunity of increasing her stake-earning record. Evidently the easy policy with the filly is deemed the right one, and as Mr. Lowry has a useful colt in Balboa, who has a name to make as well, no one can blame him for standing off the two long races with the filly. Some owners, when they get hold of good ones don't know how they should be treated and overtax them before they have arrived at a mature age, with the result that they have their constitutions, and as often as not their legs, weakened, if they are not completely broken down before they have had a chance to develop their best qualities. In the autumn well-seasoned three-year-olds may show—

Old Land, and of many in the colonies, that for important races like a Melbourne Cup, a horse could not be prepared and thoroughly strung up more than two or three times—rarely more than once—and the contention was sound. Very hard raced and completely strung up two and three year olds rarely go on very successfully in their fourth year. Desert Gold has not been one of the over-raced ones, and the easy tasks before her, after the easy time she has had since the New Year, should help her. After she has wintered for a month or two she should come out ready for a strenuous four-year-old campaign, if such is mapped out for her. Report has it that the good things of the spring in Australia are looked upon as likely to have a magnetic attraction for her owner, and as Mr. Lowry has had two excursions to the other side, in which Soltano and Bobrikoff were leading actors, there is probably something in the rumour of another contemplated trip. With Desert Gold, Balboa, Tete-a-tete Grand Duchy and Egypt he would have a useful team with which to go a-racing on the other side of the Tasman Sea, as each could no doubt be placed to advantage.

Prior to Warstep winning the Trentham Gold Cup in 3min. 24sec., Bridge was the accredited holder of the New Zealand and Australasian two-mile record of 2min. 25sec. The Australian, as distinct from the Australasian, record was held by Lilyveil, who won the Sydney Cup in 3min. 26½sec. Warstep's record may possibly be lowered this Easter, but not by any horse or mare of the same age carrying weight for age. The Trentham track on Saturday was too slow for really brilliant time. The Trentham Gold Cup may some day be won by a three-year-old capable of beating Warstep's time, but the opportunity for Desert Gold has passed for this season.

From Burnside, Elderslie, Oamaru, comes word that an equine celebrity, none other than the prolific old Gossoon mare Maddar, is dead. As the dam of seventeen foals the term prolific is used advisedly. Few mares have so many. She was mated with Stepniak when three years old, and in 1899 produced her first, and only missed in one season, being, as a matter of fact, in foal to imported Solferino at the time of her death. About this illustrious mare more anon.