

RACING REVIEWED.

AUCKLAND RACING CLUB.

SUMMER MEETING.

AUCKLAND CUP AND FOAL STAKES DAY.

A RECORD GATHERING.

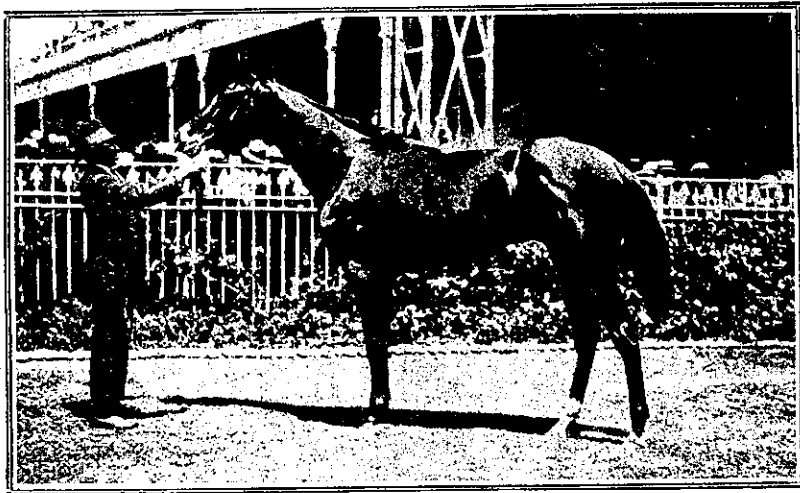
The luck of some racing clubs is proverbial. The Auckland Racing Club is one of the most fortunate in the matter of weather and in all other respects. No other club in the Dominion has such a charming domain and quite such all-round attractions. There is only one Ellerslie, and there the people from all parts of New Zealand and many from parts beyond who can afford or make it convenient to do so assemble when the big meeting of the year is on. They love Auckland most when the Christmas and New Year carnival is on, but they enjoy the meetings held at Ellerslie at any time of year. The meeting commenced on Boxing Day, 1917, despite all drawbacks to transit, could not have started under more favourable conditions. The whole countryside had received a refreshing rain shortly before the day, the weather on the day was perfect, and the programme of events carded for the afternoon was one of the best that a secretary of any New Zealand racing club has been able to present. The horses came from most provinces, the greater proportion were visitors from beyond the headquarters of racing in the North Island, and with one or two exceptions had raced at Ellerslie and elsewhere previously during the season, and most of them with distinction. They came mostly with the strongest of recommendations, and equally strong followings.

Canterbury, Wellington, Hawke's Bay, Taranaki, Poverty Bay—indeed, each sent horses along to the meeting, and strong contingents of men and money to follow the bent of their inclinations. It was quite expected that with the usual four days' racing compressed into three that investments per medium of the totalisator would be largely increased on Boxing Day as compared with the corresponding days of previous years, and so it proved. Investors planked their money down freely, until the total turnover for the day amounted to £80,985, a record for New Zealand. A record crowd was responsible for this. Their speculations were less heavy in proportion to their numbers than at other meetings held during the same period elsewhere. The larger the crowd the less money is gambled in proportion. People do not all go racing to worship at the shrine of King Totalisator, however, though the large majority like to have an interest. Between the little groups that make up a single ticket and the big betting owners, or speculators who do not own horses, but take a pleasure in dashing their money down on those of other people who do, the pools are made up. Their average was larger than ever before, but the sum put through on the Auckland Cup, the chief race of the day, fell just a little short of last year, when a record for New Zealand was reached—£13,315 was the total, and on the Railway Handicap £12,624. These are the pre-post betting events, and despite all legislative attempts to put down betting away from the race-course, it would be safe to say that the investments in different parts of New Zealand and in Auckland over these particular events right up to the day would amount to quite as much, if not more, than was handled on the long-distance event. Some people call this robbing the totalisator or robbing the clubs, but the clubs cannot be robbed of what does not belong to them, and it was quite clear that even with the very fine conveniences the Auckland R.C. have on their property, the most up-to-date totalisator, all the money that people desired to put on could not be taken in the time between the races. People will not invest on the day until they have seen the horses in the paddock or doing their preliminaries, or at least a large number will not do so, and thus a lot of money must go on during a few minutes.

The races were started punctually by Mr. O'Connor, and started well, and lots of money was shut out. More perhaps would have been invested, too, if the paying out could have been

done with as great expedition as the selling of tickets. The large business, however, was handled pretty well, but in this one particular there was room, and always appears to have been room, for improvement. Dividends, excepting in about three instances, were small, and the dead-heat in the Railway between King Lupin and Hymestra (who was coupled with Nanna) provided more tickets to be paid on than ever before. Larger dividends on fewer tickets, it goes without saying, make for greater expedition in the paying out. Mr. McManemin had the satisfaction of seeing good fields and some capital racing, and the Cup field was as representative of New Zealand as any one of its predecessors. Seven of the 17 runners had competed in the New Zealand Cup, including the first half-dozen in that race.

Taking the events in the order they came on the card will be perhaps as well. A nice field of fifteen went out for the Shortland Plate, and the best supported were the Hawke's Bay-owned Silver Tongue and the Palmerston North representative Glendower, but the Takapuna-owned three-year-old, the imported Australian-bred Lord Kenilworth, who had the pace and the luck to get a clear run from a splendid start, never gave anything else a look in and won from end to end, and the other pair, each of which were hampered during running—and along the back Glendower was last but one—were close together, second and third, Lough Ennell, who ran second for some distance, Don't and British Arch coming at short intervals.



THE 1917 GREAT NORTHERN FOAL STAKES WINNER—Mr. H. E. Troutbeck's b g DEMAGOGUE, 2yrs., by Demosthenes—Gold Bond.

The Great Northern Foal Stakes rarely attracts as many runners. Of the ten that lined up, Mr. T. H. Lowry's pair, Finmark and Kilhope, commanded most attention, but Bo-peep and Demagogue, previous winners, also were each heavily supported, and then came Informal, the Auckland representative, whose stock had fallen notwithstanding that he had accounted for all the same lot before with the exception of Kilhope, who he had not met, and Spanner, who was making his first appearance in public. Of the lot he looked on the too robust side. Shortly told, from a good start Pontoon made the running and was joined in the straight by Demagogue, who he bored over towards the stand rails inside the last furlong, but who, escaping more serious inconvenience, was able to go on and win by a length and a-half. Pontoon's serpentine action let Finmark get into second place, and Kilhope, running true, was fourth, and he was perhaps the best colt engaged. Spanner, however, for another green one, ran well for a first start. Informal died to nothing and Bo-peep never showed up, and Shining Light beat both. Two-year-old form is still hard to gauge. The best will be seen later on perhaps. This can be said without detracting from Demagogue's merits. He is a neat, nice gelding son of Demosthenes, who is a distinct success in getting early speed.

There were eighteen runners for the Robinson Handicap, the erratic Empire, who again gave trouble at the post, being made favourite. Patetonga, whose owner had been reluctant to do much fast work with him because of his bleeding habit, jumped out and led the field from a good start and continued in front for six furlongs, when Fabrique, Bellacity, Blue Cross and Kereone were all up with him, and they finished well together, three-parts of a length divid-

ing the first-named pair. Fabrique was nearly as good a favourite as Empire, who faded out after failing to get quite into the fighting line.

Much has been written about the Cup horses. It was a racer for backers of favourites, and their running looked too bad to be true and was certainly not like the form of good horses that had so recently been seen to so much greater advantage. Johnny Walker, coupled with Menelaus, was really the favourite, and the pair, which finished nose and nose for the New Zealand Cup, carried double the amount invested on Toatere, who was voted unlucky to lose the Auckland City Handicap at the A.R.C. spring meeting. Snub, who was third in the New Zealand Cup, was third favourite, and a fair amount of support came for the English-bred Cynic, but anything after the first four named would have paid a good dividend. About the condition of the horses it can be said that they nearly all looked well. Seadown seemed to have lightened up rather quickly since his arrival, and Multifual sweated a bit more than some of the others. Sir Ralph and Gold Fran each looked more robust than some of the competitors. Racing had given to the majority a seasoned appearance. The story of the race need not be a long one. It can be described in a very few words. Mullingar was the first and Red Ribbon the last to jump away from a good send-off. Fiery Cross took charge after going about three furlongs, and Red Ribbon followed him, and that was how the race was run from end to end. The chestnut son of Glenapp and Red Cross had all the brilliancy and bowled along passing the people's stand the first time, with Red Ribbon, Mullingar and Adjutant as his nearest attendants. The last-named, on the rails, receiving a bump through

Fiery Cross' dam (Red Cross) as well, she being by Son of a Gun, the Auckland-bred New Zealand Cup winner, who was got by Anteros from the Musket mare Vivandiere. Glenapp was got by Enthusiast, son of Ayrshire, blood which has been very prominent this season in leading winners, Biplane and Cagou being notable instances of many. Fiery Cross is a chestnut, some call him a soft looking one, but he is anything but that and the result proclaims him what few thought him—a genuine stayer. He is more than that, too, in short, he is probably the best handicap horse under weight over a long distance in New Zealand to-day, this remembering that Chortle is still racing, for the last-named is not raced beyond a mile and a-quarter in these days, and Desert Gold is not taking on handicap events. Mr. Roberts talks of giving Fiery Cross a spell, but we hope he will keep him going to the end of the season and let him have a race with the best that can be brought against him at Easter or in April at Wellington.

The Grafton Hurdle Race saw Sir Solo, the Auckland Cup winner of 1913, in good form, and he beat the useful but unlucky Fisher, who ran a good race and justified the support accorded him. Sir Solo is far from a spent light, and seems very sound. Gluetanus is doing better as he gets age, and he finished third. Dan-castor fell and Tatimi broke down.

The Railway Handicap was remarkable for several things. Mr. H. E. Troutbeck started three (Form Up, Simonides and Elocution) and Mr. W. R. Kemball a brace (Hymestra and Nanna) and the field numbered 15 and resulted in a dead-heat between the three-year-old Hymestra and the ever-green seven-year-old horse King Lupin, who won the race as a three-year-old in 1min 13 1-5sec (record time for the event) and had run unplaced in it twice since. He was in great form and when he swept down on Hymestra, who was leading and appeared to have the race won all the way, J. O'Shea had to get busy, and though King Lupin actually headed the colt he responded again, indeed, both did, and they crossed the line locked together. King Lupin had put up two track gallops on the eve of the meeting which brought him into prominence. On the other hand, Hymestra had failed to show a really impressive gallop in private and lots of people were declaring that it would be useless starting him. Nanna was the one that was being backed. She had galloped brilliantly, but yet when it came to racing for keeps there was no cheating on Hymestra's part, and likely the gallop would do him a lot of good, as he had loafed a lot in his work. It was a fine race and Nanna was third, and there is no need to say anything about the others, of whom Gazique ran best, Waiuta, Housewife and Croesus (who is sore) being next. The time was the second best ever done in the race and the best under the weight. King Lupin is a fine horse of very true conformation, but is not a big one and 8.12 is a fair weight for him. Hymestra is also a fine colt. Though he has not grown since he was two years old he seems very solid now and he ran game enough to please. We are never over sanguine about the staying qualities of the Birkenhead horses. His dam is by that horse, but there is a double cross of Musket at the back and that means fighting. Hymettus has not left one so good as this colt. The Waikato-bred one (King Lupin), who, like Fiery Cross, was got by a sire imported by the New Zealand Government, it should be mentioned was handicapped to receive liberal allowances from Form Up and Croesus, who were expected to fight their Stewards' Handicap battle over again. The honours of the race were, of course, with Hymestra, who was carrying 2lb over his w.f.a., while King Lupin had 3lb under his. A number of the horses put up over-weight. Gazique had 1lb, Housewife 5lb, Lady Jack 8lb, Waiuta 11lb and Keep Watch 9lb. There was great enthusiasm at the result.

The Nursery Handicap saw Sir George Clifford's colours carried to victory by a useful colt in Long Range, by Antagonist from Telescope, who started a little better favourite than Killowen, who made the running for four furlongs and then collapsed like a pricked balloon, being passed by First Rain (a nice gelding), the winner (Long Range), Piraeus and Principal Lady in the last furlong.

The business of the day ended up with a fourteen-horse field in the Christmas Handicap. Tinopai and Gamecock ended up the best supported, and then came Hendra and Colonel Soult. Lightning led, but Colonel

others that were well bunched on the outside closing in and lost his rider (F. E. Jones), who had a very narrow escape when he struck the rail and rolled under it. Fiery Cross drew out along the back, but Red Ribbon went after him over the rise at the five furlong post. Then he drew away again, and once more Red Ribbon closed up, only to be shaken off again, and at the distance she made a final effort and just for a few strides it looked as if Fiery Cross was being ridden a little. At this stage Multiply and Cynic headed Mullingar and got close up behind Fiery Cross and Red Ribbon, while Tekka (on the rails) made a good finishing effort, but it was of no avail. Fiery Cross had got them all beaten trying to catch him, and he won comfortably by three-parts of a length, and Red Ribbon still had enough left in her to beat Multiply by half a length, and then came Cynic (a bit further out) and Tekka (next the rails), almost on terms, followed at a couple of lengths' interval by Mullingar, while Rebel was still further back, and then came Multifual and the others well strung out. The pace was on all the way pretty solid and the race was run in record time. The following times were struck by Mr. J. K. Douglas:—One furlong 14sec, two furlongs 26sec, three furlongs 38 2-5sec, four furlongs 51sec, seven furlongs 1min 30 3-5sec, mile 1min 43 2-5sec, nine furlongs 1min 58sec, mile and a-quarter 2min 10sec, mile and three furlongs 2min 23sec, mile and a-half 2min 35sec, and the two miles 3min 25 4-5sec. The last mile and half mile were the fastest, and the improved bend into the straight—which had to be traversed twice—will easily account for the race being a record one. We were sure of fresh track records being made and prepared our readers for this. The winner was bred by Mr. D. H. Roberts, a well-known breeder and owner, who owned the sire and bred