



The autumn meeting of the Australian Jockey Club, so fraught with interest this year, chiefly because Desert Gold was representing the Dominion, came to an end on Saturday last. It began particularly well, with an attendance estimated at nearly 60,000—57,000 being officially announced—and was carried over the second stage on Easter Monday with an increased assemblage estimated at about 65,000, and no doubt the third and concluding days were proportionately well attended also. The meeting was successful from the book-making point of view, money being plentiful on the two first days and no doubt all through the piece. The management at the totalisators on the opening day was not all that could be desired, and £27,921 only was put through in the paddock, but on Easter Monday there was a decided improvement, £40,775 10s. being handled inside the paddock, and a total of £57,802 10s. during the afternoon on the six events. This is very good business, all things considered, and with so many pencilers operating. Sporting writers in Sydney are agreed that it seems impossible for sufficient totalisator provision to be made to cope with the whole of the betting business at Randwick. They report the 1—2—3 dividends as very popular, but it will perhaps be time to pronounce more definitely on this feature when the totalisator has been longer in use. The more dividends paid out the more expensive the sport for backers, the fractions alone being heavy. When there are very large fields and the dividend-payers are well concealed it may work out best, but those who like to back their fancies for a straight-out win will not take so kindly to the 1—2—3 compulsory system. With straight-out books and straight-out prices on the day, and a tote that pays firsts only and another paying firsts and seconds, in addition to the 1—2—3 tote, backers would have plenty of variety. The paying out on so many tickets as will be issued is a big matter. Most people want to get their dividends as quickly as possible in order to re-invest. These, however, are matters that will suggest themselves to the powers that be, and can be adjusted, and no one knows the totalisator business better than Mr. Crooper, the secretary of the Australian Jockey Club, whose experience in Western Australia, when things were at their best on the Goldfields, is of value. The cable announced on Monday that just over £144,000 had been handled during the four days.

In our last issue we had something to say about the racing at Randwick on the opening day, and we were then in possession of the fact that Desert Gold had won the Autumn Stakes, one mile and a-half, at weight for age, but we were not then aware that in doing so she had, in addition to Thana and Gadabout, who finished second and third respectively, the English horse Lanus, who was fourth, her old opponent Wallace Isinglass, who is reported to have collided with Kandos, Westcourt, Karanaud King, Kenninquinair, The Fortune Hunter, and Rebus—the last-named the Sydney Cup winner—against her. It was in this race that she beat the strongest field, and in her next essay, the All-aged Stakes, she beat the best miler in Australia, Cetigne, for the second time. This race included a lot of good horses, too, but Cetigne is the accredited miler, and he proved it by running second, following his brilliant display in the Doncaster Handicap with 9.12. Desert Gold finished her campaign as brilliantly as she began it—really more so—and was evidently fit and nearer the top of her form than she has been this season. We can all lift our hats to her. Only two horses have beaten her since she has been away, and for Wallace Isinglass it can be claimed that for the heavy racing he has had he has proved a consistent performer and a genuine stayer over a distance. It is clear that up to a mile and a-half Desert Gold has met no equal at weight for age, and that is something to say where there are so many horses, colonial and imported. So far, then, there is reason to exult

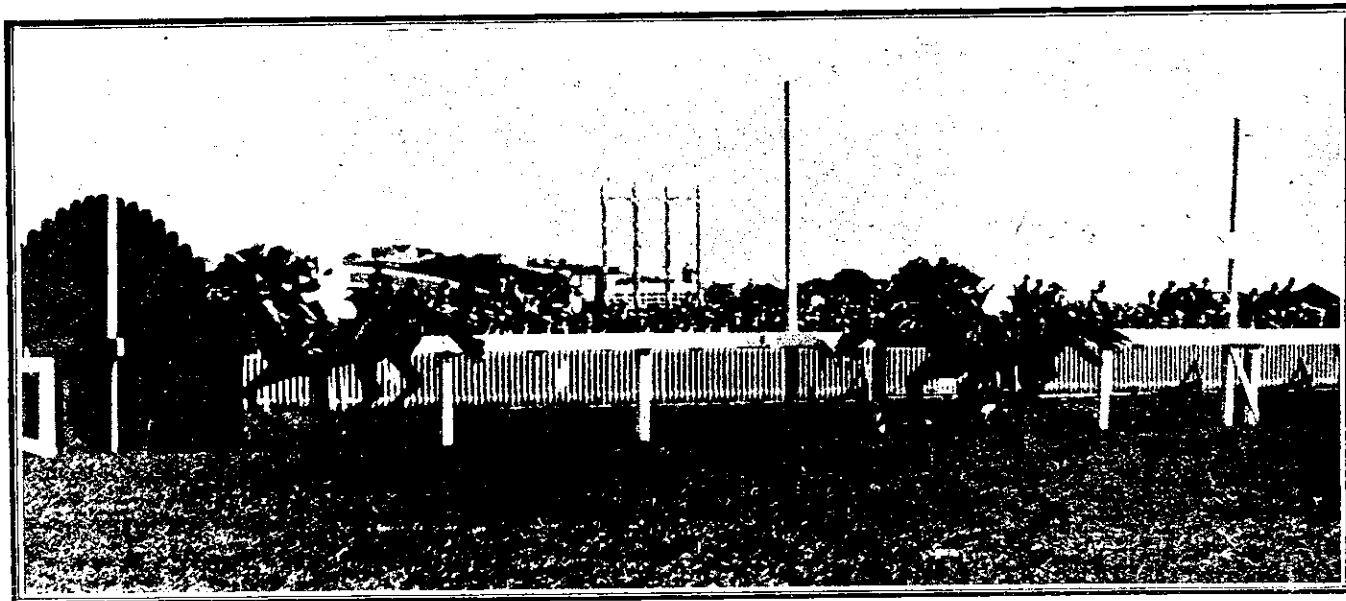
over Desert Gold's achievements, and we quite believe that had she been just as ready and been ridden with less dash and more patience she might have returned to New Zealand with a complete weight-for-age certificate. She has done well to win at a mile, a mile and a furlong, and at a mile and a-half twice, and it is rare to find horses in these days doing equally well at each of those distances inside a few weeks.

The only other horse to beat the New Zealand mare was the four-year-old Wedge, and some people think he should not have beaten her in the Futurity Stakes at Caulfield, though in receipt of 13lb. He is a good horse, however, and has been awarded 10.6 in the Goodwood Handicap, the chief six-furlong race run at the South Australian Jockey Club's meeting. There are seventy horses engaged and the minimum is 6.7. In the Adelaide Cup, one mile five furlongs, he has 9.6, second top weight to Maggie (9.9), and is set to give The Toff 11lb. and Di Gama 15lb. The minimum is 6.7 in that event also and over sixty horses were nominated. From this it would seem that Wedge is a four-year-old of class and is rightly held in much esteem. That Desert Gold was up against a pretty solid proposition when she met him is evident. Though McLachlan has stated that he thinks the mare would beat Wedge at the weights if another opportunity was afforded her, accounts of the race showed that Wedge got up from behind after meeting with some bad luck during the running, and he must have been pretty

sible, but, of course, highly improbable, that she will win anything like the value of the races that have fallen to the greatest of her sex in England, but she has now won more money than any mare in the Australasian colonies, and has come into the select few of winners of over £20,000. A lot of easy money has come her way certainly, and she has not been so severely taxed as some that have raced before her—a reason why she should last longer. She would likely have won a great deal more had she been domiciled in Australia and freely nominated for the classic races there and raced in the weight-for-age events at three, four and five years old and in some of the handicaps as well. During her few weeks' campaign in Australia, while there has been no weight-for-age races for her to race in in the Dominion, she has earned in first and second money a goodly sum, which will go to the patriotic fund for providing hospital cots for invalided soldiers, less expenses incurred over the trip and taxation deductions. Mrs. and Mr. Lowry are to be congratulated upon the success of the All Black mare, and their trainer, F. Davis, must share therein. McLachlan, her rider, deserves a word of praise, too, though we could have wished that her New Zealand pilot, J. O'Shea, who has been associated with her in the majority of her wins, had been taken over at the same time, not that he would have done any better than the crack horseman who did ride her, but it would have been more completely a New Zealand campaign.

Mason, who rode her in New Zealand and went with her to Australia, always regarded her as the best of her sex he had had to do with, though he trained Cruciform and placed her on almost an equally high pedestal.

Having done in the autumn with the Australian and English horses what Biplane did with all-comers in the spring, the first meeting between Desert Gold and Biplane will naturally be fraught with intense interest, and that meeting is in sight, and with ordinary luck in the matter of weather there is every reason to expect that on Wednesday and Thursday next these two cracks will meet, first in the Awapuni Gold Cup, a mile and a-quarter, at weight for age, and next in the Manawatu Stakes, over six furlongs, at weight for age, each with the extreme penalty for previous successes. Desert Gold has won both races named, and last year, with the going heavy, romped over The Toff, Bjerneborg and Bee, the time registered being 2min 14sec, showing how holding the going was. Given clear fine days there will be no excuses for either of the contestants, though with the Comedy King colt there is the fact to be remembered that he is thick winded and that must sooner or later come against him as a racing machine. He is a hard puller, but presuming that he is strung up to concert pitch and his form at Riccarton suggests that he was a lot fitter than at Wanganui, there will be no loitering at any stage of the races in which he takes part. If Mr. Lowry wants to win either or both the races referred to



PRINCE VIRIDIS (C. Barden) scores an easy victory from THRICE (R. Lewis) in the A.J.C. St. Leger (1¾ miles), on the opening day of the Australian J.C.'s autumn meeting.

good on the day, and entitled to all the credit we can give him. His Newmarket Handicap form cannot be ignored, and it must be remembered that he was giving weight to Cetigne, the winner, in that race. So much for the form of the best horses in Australia just now.

We have assumed that Desert Gold has been fitter for a severe task over a distance in Australia than she has been in New Zealand, the solid contracts she had before her necessitated stringing her up to concert pitch. She won most of her races in New Zealand without being what would be called raced into form, and some of them when only a little more than half seasoned, and probably lost a few for the same reason, but anything that has ever beaten her has had to race to do so, there has never been any loitering in races in which she has taken part, and never since she was a two-year-old has anything led her in races beyond five furlongs during the early stages. She has almost invariably made the pace after getting settled into her stride. Her record is a splendid one, and there is no reason to doubt her vitality lasting over some years yet, if her owner decides to continue racing her, as we may hope he will, if only to establish further record making and to give her the opportunity of excelling anything achieved in the way of race winning by one of her sex. It is pos-

Now that the New Zealand-owned mare has given Australians a taste of her quality there are sure to be discussions as to whether she is as good as the best of her sex that have raced in Australia. It is hard to determine these matters. People will hold divergent views. Desert Gold is not the only first-class and high-class mare that has been sent on Australian soil. Australians will mention their Wakeful in the same breath and some of them will share the opinion that Cruciform, who went from New Zealand and quite held her own with Wakeful, cannot well be left out of calculations, as they thought Wakeful and La Carabine (as they undoubtedly were) two of the greatest stayers of their sex that ever graced the Australian turf. Thana, who ran second in the Autumn Stakes to Desert Gold, was probably not produced right at her best, but she is the best of her sex now in Australia. Carlita, bred in New Zealand, played a strong hand at times and was no doubt really good. Gladsome was another good New Zealand production, but not so good as Cruciform. Lurline raced too long ago to make comparisons, but we fancy that her great deeds in New Zealand and some of her performances in Australia, when the minimum in important handicaps in which she was engaged in the Commonwealth was 5.4, will be well remembered by racing men of the old school. We know that R. J.

it will have to be with Desert Gold, though he has Estland in both. We hope that Desert Gold and Biplane meet in each of these races fit and well. The better seasoned should be the mare, who has had an uninterrupted course of training and racing. There are other good horses engaged in both events. Bisogne is only in the Cup, and though the three races he had at Ellerslie and Avondale will have brought him on and he may run a very good race it is questionable whether he will be forward enough to do himself justice for a couple of months or more. Koesian's presence was not expected, but his owners is a patron of these races, and his horse has been racing very well of late and may be given a run. Mene-laus is one of our best geldings of his age, but is hardly equal to the top class on w.f.a. terms at this distance. Estland will need to be better than he was at Ellerslie and Wanganui, but profiting by experience his trainer will no doubt have him more prepared, if he is started. Impediment is a sure starter all going well with her to the day, and she is a very consistent filly. The outlook for a good race for the Awapuni Cup is as pleasing as when Chortle Warstep, Merry Roe, Ventura, Balboa and Pavlova met and a record was established after a good race. This time there are three three-year-olds left in.