

GRUESOME GAMBLING.

A craving for the eccentric and phenomenal is evidenced in many of the wagers in which our forefathers indulged. In the reckless, hard-drinking days of the Eighteenth Century all kinds of wagers were made, says the "Weekly Telegraph." There is a true story concerning Heidegger, Master of the Revels to George II., whose ugliness, it was said, could not be surpassed. Wagers were made on the point. After the slums of London had been searched from one end to another, an old woman was found who seemed to be more ugly than the Master of the Revels. The judges were reluctantly bound to admit that Heidegger had met his match, until it was suggested that he should put on the old woman's bonnet. But this caused him to appear so much uglier than the old woman that he was unanimously declared to be the champion of extreme ugliness.

Nothing was too trivial—or too serious—for betting in these days. A famous musician used to tell a strange story of a wager which he averred he had really witnessed whilst on a visit to London. One day as he was walking across London Bridge a poor wretch jumped up on to the parapet and leapt down into the river. There was at once a rush of eager spectators, and a voice shouted, "I'll bet he drowns!"

"Two to one he'll swim ashore!"
"Done!"

Meanwhile the musician had hastened to get a boat, and was rowing with a waterman to the rescue of the unhappy creature. As they reached him there was a cry, "Leave him alone—there's a bet on!" The waterman, thinking that the man was swimming for a wager, did not make any further attempt to save him, and the drowning man sank, to rise no more.

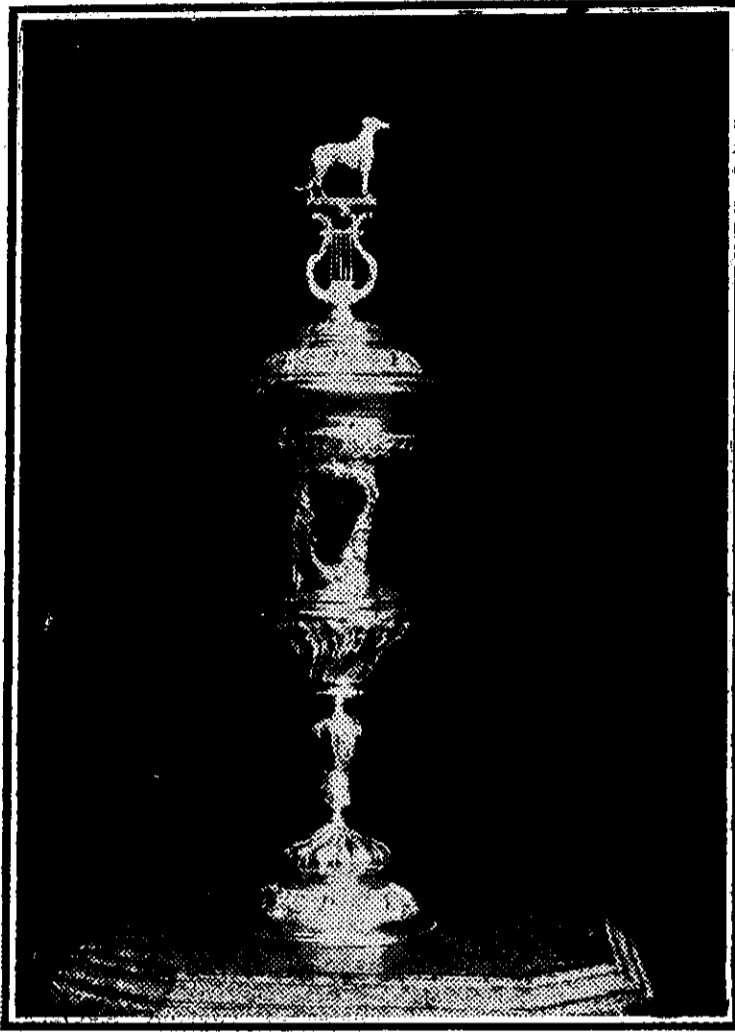
On another occasion a man dropped down at the door of a famous London club, and was immediately carried into the house. Was he dead or not? Betting commenced, and the odds were taken for and against. Some, who had staked hundreds on the man being dead, protested when

their opponents desired to bleed the unconscious object of these wagers. To use a lance, they argued, would affect the fairness of the bet. And thus the solitary chance of the individual perhaps regaining consciousness and life again was frittered away in this vapid and foolish manner.

In order to decide a wager, one night, after a number of boisterous young men had been dining less wisely than well, one of them in a

fit of bravado, consented to enter at midnight the vault of a church, and, in proof of his having done so, to stick a fork into a coffin which had been recently deposited there. This he succeeded in accomplishing, and was about to return triumphantly, when he found himself caught. He was so overcome with terror that he fell into a swoon, and was discovered in that condition by his companions, who, being alarmed at his absence, had come out to look for him. The

fork which he had stuck into the coffin had caught hold of his long overcoat, and this sudden terror had as nearly as possible proved fatal.

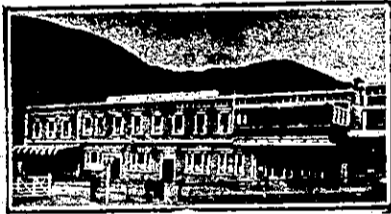


THE WATERLOO CUP,

To be competed for at the South Canterbury Coursing Club's meeting on July 2, 3, and 4, at Plumpton, Timaru.

When "The Chance of a Lifetime" was revived last month at the King's Theatre, Melbourne, under the direction of William Anderson, the opening night saw the usual measure of excitement behind the scenes, for everybody concerned was bent upon doing full justice to the task in hand. There was one member of the cast, however, upon whom the infection of excitement made no effect whatever. She stood unperturbed and apparently indifferent to all that was going on around, and waited for her cue quietly and without any display of interest. That member of the cast was the thoroughbred mare, Trixie, whose stair-climbing feat, followed by a walk along a narrow gangway 20 feet from the floor, was one of the most interesting features of an exciting play. Trixie is an equine aristocrat in every respect, and her appearance affords no contradiction to her pedigree.

One afternoon a trio of Hindus looked in at the stage door of the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, while the matinee was on, and gazed at the procession of Orientals inside with interest bordering on fascination. A subdued discussion then took place between the Hindus, who presently asked whether "Sahib Asche" would allow them to have a look around. They explained that they had travelled widely in the East, and had formerly been in the Bengal Lancers. Word was sent to Mr Asche in his dressing-room, who consented to the request, and the turbaned visitors were conducted behind the scenes. They watched everything with marked interest, and waited until the conclusion of the performance, when they thanked Mr Asche and said that they were surprised at the correctness of everything in the production. "Even the salaams," said the spokesman of the party, "are quite right as they should be." The next day Mr Asche received a memento of the visit of the Hindus in the form of a black opal pin, accompanied by a message expressing their gratitude and admiration.



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