

lowances when non-winners, it will be very interesting indeed to learn what penalised horses will be set to take on their several contracts. Penalties are on the sliding scale of 3, 5, 7 to 10lb., the maximum for winning a clear 1000sovs. The penalties apply to winners this year since August 1. Good winners last year or in the previous year, if they have not won this year, do not have their poundage increased. Those that have never won, if three years old or over receive 10lb., and those two years old that are in the same position receive an allowance of 7lb. each. Thus it is possible for the horses of varying ages that have earned the maximum to meet non-winners at a disadvantage of 10lb. to 20lb. Accepting the weight-for-age test as equitable to start off with, 20lb. would mean in some instances a very big pull.

Mermin, of the two-year-olds engaged in the Royal Stakes, has earned the maximum impost; Aureate, sister to Desert Gold, and Smoke Concert are a pair of fillies that will have to carry 6.3 to Mermin's 7.8. Surveyor, with his penalty for winning the Stead Memorial Stakes, will have 9.5; Golden Bubble, of the same age, 8.11. Rossini, a good winner last year, will not have his poundage added to unless he should win in the interval, as may others. Chrysostom has earned more by way of penalty than Humbug this season, and would therefore have to concede the latter a few pounds. In the Railway Handicap Humbug is weighted at 5lb. his superior. At the distance he may be, but it is a debatable point just now. Illumination and Delight will, if they do not win in the interval, meet those of their own age on favourable terms. The first-named would have the full concession. The Royal Stakes may result in quite a good race. It seems a good while ahead to ask owners to become liable for the whole of their subscription towards the stake, but twenty-five is the number who, with the others that have gone out, have provided such a big slice of this classic prize. We were not prepared to see Aureate's name still figuring in the Foal Stakes and Royal Stakes, and though we find it there it is not in any of the handicaps, and as she

has so far given no promise at all it must be presumed that, like some others left in the classic events, the necessity for withdrawing to save the forfeit money has been overlooked.

The Shortland Plate entries are numerically good, and a number of those entered are thus handicapped by the owners themselves. Races of this kind are very popular for that reason. There are several entered which, if they can stay a mile, must have a big pull in weights compared with imposts they have received in handicaps. Forest Gold is a recent example. Fort Regel, who seemed well taken care of when entered amongst the horses with hack qualifications recently, is another, but there are others quite as noticeable. It should be a very interesting and fast race. A number of three-year-olds are engaged, and several mares, and the mares are made an allowance of 3lb.

The possibility of Gloaming, Arrow-smith, Surveyor, Volo, the best of the three-year-olds in Humbug, Chrysostom, Duo, Vespucci, Landslide, Winterwind, Listowel, Raceful, and a lot of those entered for the Islington Plate being seen out in that event will invest the race with interest. The final acceptance is not due until the 28th inst., but in the meantime some idea will be formed as to which will likely be saddled up. It will be Gloaming's first race should he train on, and every good sport will hope so, also that Arrowsmith will, if started, come out of the ordeal of carrying 10.7 in the Railway Handicap satisfactorily. It is a great task he has been set. Surveyor, too, should be a really good miler if he has stood up to his work satisfactorily since the C.J.C. meeting. Whether Volo is coming we are unaware. There is racing at the Manawatu meeting, which may keep some of the horses away on Boxing Day, but they could be brought to Auckland for the New Year and the fourth day of the meeting if their owners desire it.

The material is there for a good race for the Auckland Plate. With Oratress, Surveyor, Volo, Arrowsmith,

and Gloaming, the best of the older horses, and Duo, Gasbag, Vespucci, Raceful, and a number of others still in, it will be strange should there not be an interesting performance for this long-established event, which has invariably been won by a good one in the past. Enough has been written to show that the classic and weight-for-age races and special weight events, six of the thirty-two races on the programme, should be good as likely to introduce us to the best in their departments of various ages. There are, however, many good and useful horses in the handicap races, both open and with hack qualifications, and there are certainly a few useful hurdlers.

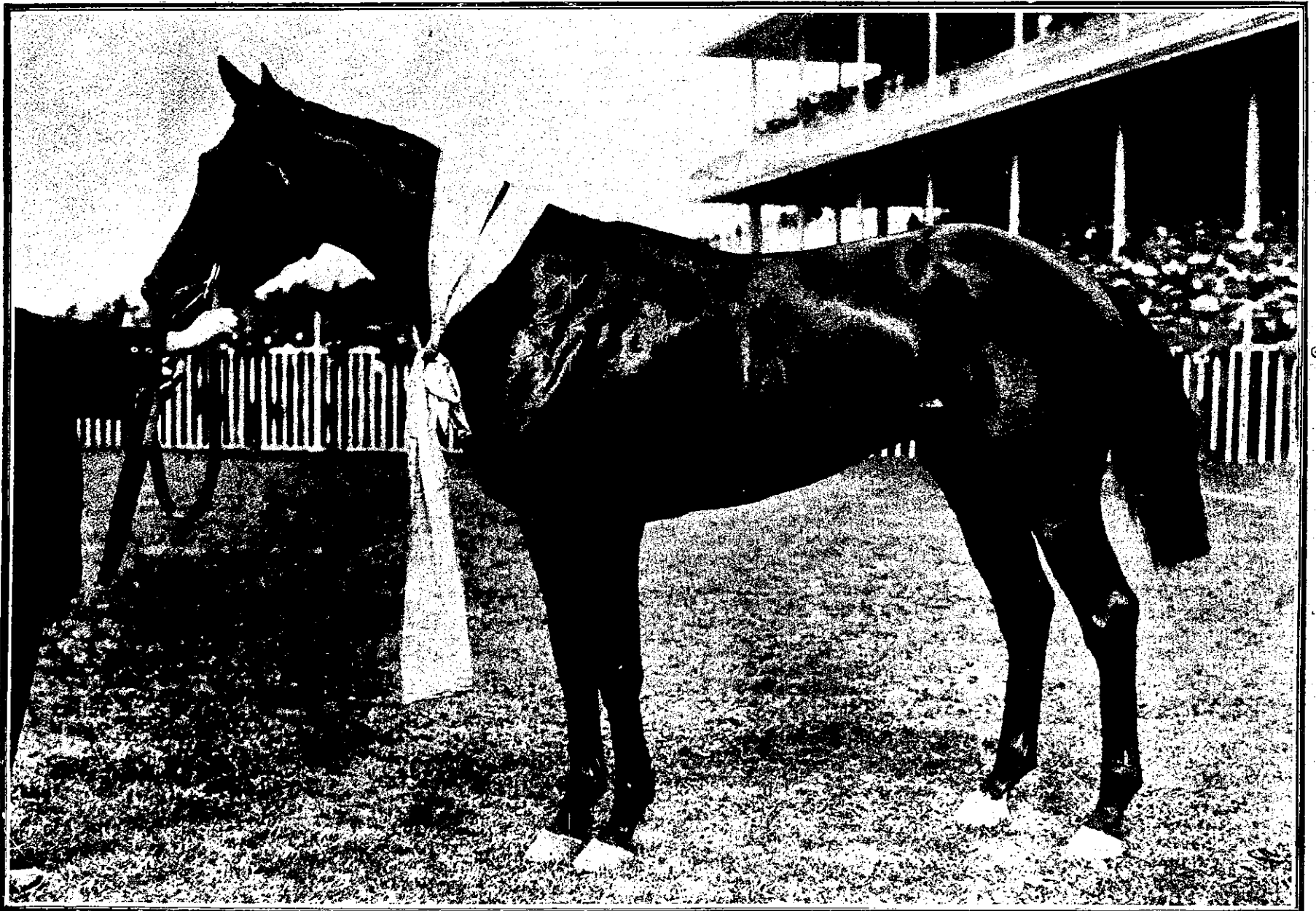
There are many racegoers who are keen on seeing the best two-year-olds, the best three-year-olds, and the best of these ages and the older horses in opposition, and to learn which are the cracks at weight-for-age over different distances, but old customs die hard, and we still find a lot of people wanting to know what they are to back for the Auckland Cup and Railway Handicap. Lots of things can happen in the interval. Some of the acceptors may be elsewhere, though we would not like to gamble much on that. The money is alluring at Ellerslie, but the first acceptance for each of the races named gives an idea of what owners intentions were when they made them. What horses are allowed to drop out before the day will do so because they have failed in some respect in their training. There was a big weeding out of both races last Friday. The cream has been taken from the separator, so to speak, and when we come to look dispassionately at the new situation it must be allowed that the double and the single problems presented are not easy with the races over a fortnight away.

The Cup candidate, Prince Willonyx, is much fancied from the way he won each of his seven-furlong races at Takapuna, but has really not had a cup preparation. He has not raced beyond a mile. Every horse he will meet has been raced over distances extending from a mile and a-quarter

to two miles, most of them over a mile and a-half to two miles. Lots of people usually regarded as "hard heads" would not have this horse at any price before he started winning. He would not have had his praises sounded from the house-tops had he been beaten in Gisborne or in his next race at Takapuna. In receipt of weight in his first race at Gisborne and weight from everything in his first race at Takapuna (in with the minimum there), what would have been thought of him if he had failed. Was there a lot of merit in his defeat of Ohinewairua and Forest Gold and the rest of the field, giving the one 20lb. and the other about the same in his last race? There certainly appeared to be in the way he defeated them, and the way the race was run. Could either of these horses turned loose win an Auckland Cup over two miles? Could either beat such horses as the three with the minimum weight, viz., Kilgour, Walton, and Blue Cross, let alone Lord Kenilworth, who could, no doubt, present either Ohinewairua or Forest Gold with all Prince Willonyx did over seven furlongs and beat them just as the English horse did?

Prince Willonyx would have had a better show of winning the Auckland Cup if he had been raced over longer distances and thus been got fit to run two miles. He will be a surprising horse should he win on the training and racing he has done. If he should win it will discount the value of all training methods and prove him not only a remarkable horse, but a really good one, which we are inclined to believe he is. All the same, it would take a lot of consideration if he were ours before we would go on with him for an Auckland Cup. We would rather chance a shorter race for a smaller stake and a bit more weight than risk him over two miles. The work he does in the interval will be watched with interest. He is up against a pretty stiff proposition even if it is allowed that he has not so formidable a field as we have seen and that he is in 11b. below Gasbag, a three-year-old not yet a proved top-hole one. It is the value of the stake and the pleasure of winning the first one of such a value that may be influenc-

Notable Performers on the New Zealand Turf — No. 125 : DUO.



A CRACK THREE-YEAR-OLD WHO CLAIMS ENGAGEMENTS IN THE ISLINGTON PLATE AND AUCKLAND PLATE AT ELLERSLIE.—MR. W. F. DESHA'S B G **DUO**, BY DEMOSTHENES—GOLD BOUND. TRAINED BY W. DONOVAN. DUO has raced with considerable success this season, winning the Wanganui Guineas (one mile), New Zealand Derby Stakes (1½ miles), and the Canterbury Cup (2¼ miles).