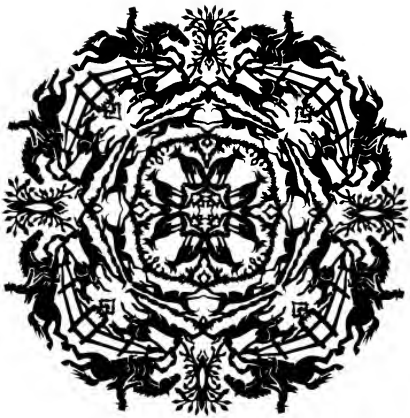
Flat-racing Explained

by

Analyst



JOHN A. SEAVERNS

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FLAT-RACING EXPLAINED.

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BY

'ANALYST'

A PRACTICAL TREATISE ON RACING, DESIGNED TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF OWNERS, BREEDERS, TRAINERS, JOCKEYS, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

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BY EXPRESS PERMISSION THIS WORK IS DEDICATED

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

THE EARL OF DURHAM

(SENIOR STEWARD OF THE JOCKEY CLUB.)

INTRODUCTION.

In submitting this work to the sporting public, especially those so well recognized as taking an intelligent as well as a lively interest in the thoroughbred and his doings, I desire it will be understood that practical information, rather than literary production, has alone been aimed at.

The work is not to be regarded in any sense as having exhausted the various subjects with which it deals. It is intended, in its inception, as merely the groundwork upon which it is hoped in the future to erect a literary edifice worthy the traditions of the greatest of our national pastimes.

That a work of the kind was needed, to mark out more clearly the distinguishing features of racing, will, I think, be found to have been exemplified at every step that has been taken throughout the investigation of the various subjects treated upon.

When it is indelibly realized that in racing, as in mathematics, deviation from a straight line proves the longer way round, perhaps the part scientific demonstration must yet play, to increase enlightenment, and make more effective ordinary "understanding," will not be overlooked.

After some years of attentive study and very close observation I desire to express the gratification it was to me that many results at which I had arrived should have met with confirmation by the timely act of Lord Durham in the famous speech he delivered on the occasion of the Gimcrack Club Meeting held at York in December last.

Commenting, as I trust I may be permitted to do, on the subject of a speech containing, as it did, so much of the highest value and importance to the best interests of the turf, perhaps it will not be deemed out of place if I take the liberty of reminding his lordship that it was the extreme accuracy of the incidents and circumstances to which he referred, coupled with results most clearly defined in all that appeared, that led to the present work being published.

When his lordship said, "It had been a year of mediocrity. They had had moderate horses, moderate riding, moderate racing, and moderate handicapping," nothing better to the purpose could have been expressed, and the public in general certainly owe a debt

of gratitude to Lord Durham for having put those words on record.

I must apologize that in the course of the work in some respects repetition became unavoidable.

I have to thank several gentlemen for at times giving me access to notes containing points in racing results of undoubted interest and value—so important, indeed, in one or two respects that I regret I am not permitted to render my acknowledgments to them in name. They, too, like myself, prefer to be unknown rather than bask in the sunshine of publicity.

ANALYST.

March, 1899.

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CHAPTER I.

BREEDING.

The delight which men take in horses is not confined to the British Isles, nor to any portion of Her Majesty's dominions. The feeling is universal throughout the world, wherever men and horses exist. From very early times the British have been a horse-loving people, and as a natural consequence improvement in the several breeds has been pursued with the utmost possible care by successive generations, and at the present it is a moot question if a higher point of excellence can under any circumstances be attained.

However, in the study of the thoroughbred no country has been so pertinacious as our own, and I think it may be safely said, in development and

general characteristics, we have not only surpassed every other, but we have been the medium of all that is possessed elsewhere in these essential particulars.

Since racing was first inaugurated in this country, we have made great strides in the number and quality of our thoroughbreds. In years gone by, as in more recent times, of course horses of exceptional character and merit came, as it were, to the front, and historically have been handed down to us as examples to be followed, on account of the great achievements they performed. For such we have the most profound admiration, knowing full well what we have to-day amongst our equine celebrities we owe to previous generations, to long strains of blood chosen from the best running blood of previous times.

It is of very great interest whether the standard of the thoroughbred has advanced or retrograded with time, and whether we have at the present a class of animal superior or inferior to those our forefathers had a generation or two ago. Unfortunately, there is nothing to tell us this. We might go back to the celebrities at any period we might choose to select, and relatively we are without the least guide that would say whether they were of greater or of lesser degree, in point of superiority

and excellence, than those we have to-day. Upon the point there is just this, that, if we except what are called the "classic races," there are no certain or ascertained facts to judge by.

It is out of the question to place reliance on handicap running as any sort of guide to relative superiority, such as is referred to, so we are left to glean what we can from weight-for-age races. If we take by way of test the winners of the Derby or St. Leger at particular times in the past, and endeavor to compare them with the winners of those races in recent years, the only possible link is derived from the published time in which the respective races were run. This in itself is of no value whatever, unless accompanied with accurate details of the climatic conditions that existed, and, above all, the precise state the ground was in. But even with these data to go upon, only a general idea can be arrived at, leaving practically all else undetermined.

However, to show the absurdity of attempting to deduce anything from the stated time in which races were run, in the almost forgotten age when that splendid horse Eclipse carried all before him, we have only to call to mind that that celebrity was accredited with having covered a mile in the utterly impossible time of *one minute*. Whatever Eclipse

might have been in the flesh as a race horse, I think, by way of comparison, we may judge him in point of merit on the record of that superb miler—on a flat course—Victor Wild, and he was only able to do the distance in 1m. 39½s., and this, too, under the most favorable conditions for securing an accurate test for speed. How Eclipse could have been credited with doing a mile in 39½ seconds *less* time it is impossible to say, but I am quite sure we have had no other horse in this country, during my experience, that could have beaten Victor Wild's time.

That the time I have given was correct does not admit of doubt, though I am quite aware that the times of races as we often see them in print are not always to be relied upon. Therefore, when we find it stated that Eclipse did a mile in the short space of 60 seconds, it is incorrect on the fact of it, or Victor Wild would comparatively have been only a very moderate horse at his best.

As I have said, it is a question if a higher point of excellence can be attained in our thoroughbreds. I think I might also couple with it the question whether a "higher point" is really desirable. However, our breeders' answer is in the affirmative, and by the aid of "scientific breeding" we may await results in the future which will be a surprise to us, if all we are told is true. Of what is called "scientific

breeding," in the sense of producing a better class of race horse than we have been familiar with, I am afraid, like the majority of people, I am not a little sceptical.

We know, however, that breeders, taking them as a body, are both zealous and enterprising, and not easily balked when difficulties must necessarily be overcome. But if "scientific breeding" is to be taken as the outcome of mating on the method of fusing certain strains of blood, with no other object than to perpetuate a particular line on the "heir-male" principle, I am bound to say that my knowledge and breeding experience do not lead me to suppose it will be attended with satisfactory results. To perpetuate the best running blood in a race horse, there cannot be doubt, is both sound in principle and correct in judgment. But to seek to perpetuate the best running blood by fusion, in the way that is said, when both sire and dam possess this qualification, I believe to be thoroughly inexpedient.

It may be that those who advocate "scientific breeding" on the lines I have said may have this in view, and if so they have me so far on their side. What I object to is that the subject of conformation, the external qualities in a race horse, should play the comparatively insignificant part it does in the estimation of breeders. We know, of course, that

breeding has its financial aspect. Putting that aside, if the aim and end is the production of higher characteristics than we yet have in the thoroughbred, my humble judgment goes to the point, not that we shall get it by fusion on the heir-male principle, nor by the perpetuation of the best running blood in combination, as I have above said. Rather by the perpetuation of the best running blood on the one side only, in combination with conformation on the other side, tending to supply points in frame construction either absent or requiring development, as the case may be.

As "weeds" are useless as race-horses, and it is therefore ruination to breed them, however good the blood may be in their veins, surely, in the absence of exception to strain on special grounds, the first of primary condition in the production of race-horses is conformation and general racing characteristics—in the sense that the highest running qualifications should be associated with the best possible model in point of frame.

That "scientific breeding" is destined to give us conformation and racing style remains to be seen, but for my part I should be disposed to think the proportion of horses lacking in substance, and not of the wear and tear sort, will be sensibly increased. As it is, in the matter of breeding there is only a low

percentage of good horses turned out year by year, compared with the indifferent and rank bad ones. I refer to the running horses, or those which find their way into training establishments, as distinguished from the very large number that are bred, many of which never leave the breeders' premises, or, if they do, are relegated in most cases to cab work, as worthless animals for any other purpose.

It is a question of much curiosity why, with all the care that appears to be taken, and the very large fees that all round are paid by breeders for stud services, there should be comparatively so few of the good and so very many of the other kind. That there should be room for saying this, on facts that are indisputable, casts a somewhat serious reflection on our breeding system, but that the system is accountable for it there cannot be much doubt. We have long drifted into the meshes of fashion, and we all know "fashion" governs the acts of breeders with a rod of iron.

Perhaps breeders who can afford to indulge their own taste, and who race their own stock, are somewhat differently placed. For all that, even with them, unconsciously to themselves it may be, to a large extent they are the slaves of their own imagination, that "fashion" should alone dictate their stud policy.

Why do breeders in common follow each other in the use of some particular sire like so many sheep? If it is because the progeny of this sire fetches high prices when the progeny of less celebrated sires do not, breeders are not so much to blame, for the evil rests more with the buyers than with them. But, then, does it not come to this: Breeders do not trouble to breed race-horses *per se*; they only trouble to breed such that people having "more money than brains" will be induced, when the sales are on, to compete against each other to invest in.

Although there may not be pretence for this, yet the fact remains that breeders who breed for sale too often send up their thoroughbred stock to the sale-ring beefy, so overladen with fat, presumably that their defects shall not be seen, and their good or essential qualities only a dream of the imagination. However, we know this, that, by the aid and glitter of sire qualification and attraction, a vast amount of blood stock rubbish is foisted upon buyers, who, in return for the fabulous sums they pay, reap, as it so frequently happens, only a barren reward for their seemingly injudicious enterprise.

CHAPTER II.

BREEDING (*continued.*)

It is a remarkable fact that the finest specimen of the thoroughbred and the highest class race-horse should invariably be found to exist in the same animal, and equally remarkable, too, that these should invariably be bred by private breeders rather than by those who breed for sale. Of course there are exceptions, but I feel I am not too wide of the mark in saying this. For instance, take the case of Galtee More, Persimmon (a grand horse on the level), St. Frusquin (an equally good horse on stiff gradients), Ladas, Isinglass, Ravensbury, Orme, La Fleche, Ormonde, all of recent years, and others that could be largely added to in point of number, well known to everybody as animals of superb physique.

Why private breeders should favor us, as they consistently do, with the finest specimens of the

thoroughbred is that conformation and general racing style is a ruling passion with them, much more so than with those who are governed by financial considerations in the choice of a sire. To make up deficiencies in the dam by the selection of a suitable sire has led, in the furtherance of this particular aim, to most satisfactory results, and has done more to make the thoroughbred what it is to-day than the adoption of any other breeding system. I do not suggest that private breeders do not give effect to the proverbial idea of uniting the best and, at the same time, the most suitable strains. To a very marked degree the perpetuation of a direct line has, as events have shown, rightly been made to give place to Nature's requirements in the matter of sustaining the by no means less important idea of physique.

Now, what is "physique" in a race horse? The muscular proportions are undoubtedly "physique" in every sense, but the most brilliant specimen of the thoroughbred must go further than what is conveyed by the words "muscular development." "Where there is bone there is muscle" is an old idea, but it is not too much to say we must have the bone in a structural sense in the right places. For instance, how many of the best judges are not satisfied with size and substance, freedom from lumber, a

bright intelligent head, good shoulders and forehand, with a depth of girth, an evenly balanced frame,—and a well-shaped and sound set of legs and feet? These characteristics, as a rule, are the beau-ideal of a youngster, especially when in type he is representative of the strain of blood to which he is accredited. Does this go far enough? In my experience it does not, for the simple reason that there are wanting the two chief elements in point of structure that constitute a perfect specimen, in the sense of what is required in a race-horse. These are strength and general development of the spinal structure. In the second place depth of hock, with the hind-quarters somewhat obliquely, rather than perpendicularly, set on, permitting the greatest possible under-reach and hind-quarter propulsion from behind. To avoid repetition as to the necessity and value of this, I refer my readers to the chapter on jockeys (pp. 49-52). However, I take the opportunity of saying there has been no horse having gained celebrity on the turf, since racing became an established institution in this country down to the present, that did not owe its success to the possession of abnormal powers in these two mentioned particulars.

The "spinal structure," which is the mainspring in the mechanism of the race-horse, is by no means

the most studied part of a horse's frame, I regret to say, by either breeders or buyers. If a colt has bone below the knee, and a seemingly powerful frame, people are generally satisfied; but they forget that very often there is a lack of power in the back and loins to wield the strength and weight below, which in such cases is only so much lumber. It is for this reason that so many horses, looking to have great power, tire so quickly, and never turn out good race-horses. What these horses, I may add, endure when efforts are made to develop their supposed racing capabilities can only be imagined when it is remembered they are never allowed to have recourse to Nature's restorer, which would relieve them at once, namely, to roll on their backs in the same manner that grazing colts always do after a bout of galloping, when something or other had set them to do so.

As I have mentioned in the pages devoted to jockeys, in galloping, the back of a horse curves to an extent to almost describe a half-circle, and there can be no doubt that the natural desire a horse has to roll after a severe gallop is prompted by natural laws, and it is only our ignorance and want of anatomical insight that have failed us in providing for it.

Why natural laws should be put aside in any one

respect with horses in training is difficult to understand. It may be sought to be justified by circumstances the trainer's art may have deftly concealed from us, but, notwithstanding, it is a hundred to one the circumstances are wrong. I know this, however, that in principle the structural condition requires the back of a horse should be straightened out and the extreme tension relieved, to enable him to be free from pain after long-continued galloping, and more especially if the speed has been excessive —as a horse experiences in training equally as in racing.

In thus writing, I cannot but think what a humane act this work will have achieved in the cause of the noble animal we love so well, and how intensely gratifying it will be, at least to me, if I shall have induced some, if not all amongst the more honored of our turf patrons, to give attention to this subject, on the lines I have pointed out. If I have appealed to their conviction, I hope, too, I may not have appealed in vain to the necessity that their horses on coming in from fast work, as soon as the saddle and sheets are removed, shall be permitted, say in an inclosed shed or other suitable place arranged for the purpose, to throw themselves down and turn over a time or two. The effect this will be found to have upon horses in training, and upon

hunt-horses, too, is astonishing, for it at once imparts freshness and vigor, when otherwise they would remain for hours tired and listless.

How many horses after being hard galloped, although allowed to get apparently composed, refuse to feed, and now and again may be seen looking somewhat anxiously around! When this happens, horses are not wholly free from pain, the remedy for it being what I have said. Upon this I must leave my readers to judge for themselves how a horse comes out of the ordeal of excessive training, if the idea is to improve as well as to secure the retention of speed.

It will certainly not be by prolonging the tension and strain upon the spinal structure, but rather by giving relief to that organ of the equine frame, for expansion and development, with as little delay as possible.

In the matter of providing a suitable place in which horses may be attracted to roll, much care is necessary. If possible it should be round or oblong, rather than square, in shape. There should be plenty of straw or sand placed round the outer edge, so that a horse may not get cast or injured in any way.

When a horse has seen another throw himself down and roll, when his turn comes he takes to it

just as a duck takes to water, and in a short time it apparently becomes the chief pleasure to look forward to, in the course of his daily, though otherwise monotonous, life. There should be no training establishment without this provision attached to it, and, as a matter of fact, no hunting establishment either.

In the purchase of thoroughbred stock for racing purposes, buyers should be forewarned not to make selection of any lacking "spinal" development. It is not sufficient that appearances indicate a good back and loins. Care should be taken to see, as with many horses, that the spinal strength does not end at the root of the tail, followed on by a weak and only partially developed dock. To be perfect in back or spinal structure, the bone should not only be massive and in due proportion with the rest of the frame, but the strength and power it imparts should be found to be carried throughout the dock itself. A powerful and well developed dock is a tolerably sure sign that a horse has a strong and well-developed back. I have known, however, a horse to be extremely strong in its dock, and not overdeveloped in point of strength in the back, but in my experience such cases are rare.

CHAPTER III.

HORSES.

If the interest which people take in the thoroughbred is great in the matter of character and pedigree, it is yet enhanced by their doings on a race course. In this respect every particular is eagerly scrutinized and dilated upon, from the time he leaves the breeders' hands to take his place in the string under the trainer's charge, in his daily work on the gallops, till he shall have completed his record, for good or for evil, and quitted the post for the paddock. One can only realize this by supposing a work to be published containing every detail that finds its way into print during the career of a single horse that has found favor with the public, and one may picture books as big as the "London Directory" to grace one's library shelves, and perhaps a place as big as Olympia to store them in, in the few years one may number by the fingers on one's hands.

I cannot say that any one has need to complain of this enthusiasm on the part of the British public, but rather to feel the greatest satisfaction that so healthful a diversion should exist, to stimulate the better side of people's natures. Wherever men are wont to congregate, there are sure to be some amongst them imbued with a natural instinct for sport, and it will not be long before the congenial topic of horses and horse lore finds vent to engross attention.

The subject of horses is very naturally provocative of contention, and equally so when it has reference to the qualities and merits of the thoroughbred.

On the subject of pedigree it is marvellous the wealth of information some men possess, and the facility with which they dive into the labyrinths of descent and the many knotty points that are present touching the perpetuation of strain.

To be well versed in pedigree was regarded a generation or so ago as one of the highest accomplishments a man recognized as a sportsman could possess. The same sentiment, indeed, prevails even now amongst many who delight to adhere to the precepts of the old school, and therefore it will be a period of humiliation for those who come after should they allow the spirit that guides it to decay and die out.

What was thought to be practical then is perhaps more of theory now; but, as far as can be seen, no signal benefit has come by the change. In the researches of pedigree, as in the elucidation of the mysteries of racing, the ambition of all is, of course, to be practical, as well as far-seeing. That this ambition, however, has been realized by many may be open to doubt—and I think very much doubt—when judged by one's common understanding.

I may have taken an erroneous view—I hope I have—of the opinions generally entertained by racing men on racing subjects, but I have never regarded them, I am bound to observe, as partaking of a very high standard. I happen to be acquainted with a good many owners, and amongst the trainers I think only a few would be able to say I was not personally known to them. Then, of the general followers of the noble pastime I have rather an extended acquaintance, so I have the means, at any rate, of forming a fairly accurate notion of what racing opinion is among racing men.

It is always futile to make sweeping allegations, and extremely wrong, I should say, at any time, if not well founded. But racing men, in my experience, are much given to taking a superficial view of events and circumstances, only to be construed in the light of what has grown to be a sort of ac-

cepted doctrine amongst themselves. This arises more especially in regard to horses running, though it permeates almost everything that transpires in racing. Take, for instance, a race which a horse has won by a head. The idea with them prevails that 2 lb. would have brought the winner and the second horse together, and that, should these same two animals again meet, giving the second horse that advantage, his chance would be equal to the other.

There surely can be nothing more haphazard than this, and nothing more fatal to the best interests of racing. This question of the 2 lb. weight, although upheld by handicap rules, and thereby accepted with authoritative sanction, is ridiculous on the face of it. Suppose these two horses do meet on the same ground, and on the altered conditions, and we are treated to the show of a race at the finish, and, watch in hand, you have examined both races with the practised eye of a critic. You will have found that the difference in running, in point of time, amounted probably to several seconds—sufficient, indeed, to have separated the horses, on their merits, by some three or four lengths.

Instead of having witnessed two genuine races, you will probably have seen two falsely-run races,

neither of which was of the least possible value so far as the merits of the horses were concerned. In all probability all the horses running were, to adopt the method so popular with some people, "waiting to make one run or dash," with the result that the race was run at no sort of speed, the whole lot being "all out" at the finish.

But suppose the second race to have taken place on another course, the course itself being up hill or down hill, or as dry and hard as a road, or in mud nearly up to the horses' fetlocks, the 2 lb. difference would remain the same. The relative chances of horses under such conditions—being a perfect impossibility to forecast—would be governed by the 2 lb. difference, and in the future treated accordingly.

There was this in the running of Hawfinch and Succoth last autumn, and these horses are handicapped and supported for future engagements on the hypothesis that a change of course, and possibly altered climatic conditions, will in no way make any alteration. "Where the one is, the other is bound to be," wrote an inspired writer not long since, which was intended to be sagacious, no doubt.

Of course, it will be understood I refer to the head-beating and the 2 lb. as a matter of common acceptance in the rules, as well as in the practice

of racing. What I have said in this respect must be taken to apply in all cases where readjustment of weights is supposed to bring horses together. Of the principle of handicapping, the late Admiral Rous used to say that "weight could be so adjusted in racing as to bring a horse and a donkey together." I do not know if the great turf mentor really intended this to be taken seriously, or whether it was one of those ponderous flights of fancy the gallant old salt so delighted to indulge in.

In any case, it could have no practical meaning beyond the suggestion that in racing "weight governs all things." Taken at this, my admiration for one who did so much to popularize the great institution of racing is in no sense diminished by the belief I entertain, that in this idea of his he was mistaken, it being an incontestable fact that horses almost in all cases run their fastest races when carrying the biggest burden. That a man of his experience and high intelligence should have been associated with the turf so very many years, and—so far as one can judge—not found this out, surpasses one's comprehension; yet it occurred constantly during his time, as it is happening now during ours.

All horses running in races have a reputation for distances. Thus, we have five-furlong and six-

furlong horses; we have then milers, and those designated "long-distance horses," which may mean any distance up to two or two and a half miles. We have three miles, it is true, but those races are few and far between now.

Of the running of horses over short distances a singular erroneous idea appears to prevail. If a "six-furlong horse" wins, say, at Epsom, he is treated as being the same horse at that distance on all courses, and it is not of any consequence whether it be Ascot, Goodwood, Sandowne, or any other place. Why this should be so it is impossible to say. How many horses there are that win at Epsom on the short courses, and seldom, if ever, win anywhere else! It is true I once saw a couple of two-year-olds run a close race at Epsom, and they were afterwards matched for a large stake to run five furlongs on the same conditions in point of weight at Ascot, and they finished a close race there. It was, however, only a sorry exhibition at the latter place, and it practically settled both, for neither was of any use afterwards.

But upon what theory these colts were matched to run on a total change of gradients it is difficult to understand. If the question of gradient alone inspired the match, there would have been something in it, and at the same time something to record, on the scientific as also on the practical side

of racing. While these colts were adapted to the Epsom gradients, and might have become good animals had they been reserved for racing only on such gradients, they were useless for incline galloping, and it was the worst possible judgment to put them to do it.

But, then, how often do we not see horses put to race on courses where, in point of gradient, they have no chance whatever! To write affirmatively that the principle of racing is entirely governed by gradient, and that the apportioning of weights (presumably to bring the running capabilities of horses to a common level) has no practical result to that end, I suppose will be derided as imaginary, and possibly unsound.

If there are those who take that view, let them explain why it is that horses run in races under favorable conditions time after time, backed by the stable, and yet make no show, and when everybody is disgusted, and not a shilling is won, they come out and win without an effort. Why did Persimmon beat St. Frusquin at Epsom, and then get beaten by St. Frusquin at Newmarket? Why did Georgic run perhaps the fastest Cambridgeshire we may see for years, and then, at a slight difference in weight two days later, get beaten by ten lengths, in a slower-run race, in the Old Cambridgeshire? Why did Jeddah win the Derby last year compara-

rively so easily, and then get beaten anyhow in the St. Leger by an animal supposed to have but an indifferent chance?

Take these as instances only of performances that occur with horses almost daily throughout the season, and what is the answer to it?

Can it be alleged that it was caused by the changed conditions in point of weight? The weights were practically the same, so it cannot be that. Can it be that the old story—that certain horses have 'come on a bit,' or 'gone back a bit,' or have 'joined the ranks of the currish lot, and won't do their best,' and endless phrases of the kind which are always made to account for defeat—is true, or does it arise from causes for which no excuses need be vouchsafed?

The latter is the point; no excuses are needed. Any one who applies his mind to a study of these eccentricities in the running of horses should experience little difficulty in finding it out. So far, however, I have never heard that any one has taken the trouble to do so.

CHAPTER IV.

HORSES (*continued.*)

In handicaps the weights are always made the scapegoat for every conceivable discrepancy, simply because there is little else to fall back upon. Nothing can be more illogical, because it is not in handicaps alone that a solution is to be found. You have only to take the weight-for-age races and turn them into handicaps, on the basis of handicap rules, before they are run, and then see for yourself how they come out after the races are over. If this does not convince you of the fallacy of the principle upon which handicaps are framed you will be incapable of conviction in matters of racing, however sound an argument may be.

Take the running in the Derby and the St. Leger last year, and apply the test to those races. Jeddah won the Derby with something in hand by three-quarters of a length, and the performance

was thought to be good enough to cause him to start for the St. Leger with the call in the market at 6 to 5 on.

If the race for the St. Leger had been a handicap, Jeddah obviously would have been top weight, and at the very least would have been set to give Wildflower 7 lbs. As it was, the latter colt met Jeddah on even terms, both carrying 9 st., and yet Wildfowler beat Jeddah by four lengths. If the principle of handicapping is worth anything it would show conclusively that it would make this kind of running impossible, but this we know cannot be done, and as a matter of fact never is done, in any handicap ever framed.

The real explanation in the case of Jeddah is that which applies with equal force to the running of Persimmon, St. Frusquin, Georgic, and every other horse seen on a race course—that is, special adaptation and peculiarity in respect of gradient. When horses win in fast-run races they are obviously on a right gradient; when their speed is slow, and they are seen to labor in their stride, they are on a wrong gradient.

About the peculiarity of horses in this respect, a great deal might be written. There are some alone adapted to race on courses perfectly level, and they are of no practical good when put to

run on ground that differs in this essential. Some horses are of little use on a strictly level course, and are only seen to advantage when the winning-post stands, or is placed at a spot, very much below the level of the starting post. Then, again, others are of little account on either of the courses just mentioned, but have sterling qualities when put to race where there is a steep incline, and this right up to the finish.

Next to be considered are a class that, whatever their peculiarity might be in point of gradient, never show anything approaching their best form, or, in other words, "high class speed," unless in a sense the ground is as hard as a brickbat. These horses, in a *wet* season, are generally of little good for racing, and it is quite by chance they can be made to pay their training expenses.

But perhaps the most remarkable, those possessing the greatest peculiarity, are horses capable of racing in the deepest ground, and with mud almost up to their fetlocks skim along apparently without an effort, looking to be going on the surface as light as a feather. These horses, however, invariably are useless when the ground is *hard*, being too slow, unless placed in very moderate company.

In every training establishment, there is necessarily a rare mixture of horses having peculiarities

of the character to which I have referred. What is done to single them out and place them on suitable courses, under suitable conditions, is best understood by what is to be seen of their performances.

As everybody who goes racing knows, there are horses continually running that go for months without winning a single race. When this happens, there is, of course, no commiseration or kindly word expressed in respect of the horse, but, on the contrary, the wretched animal is made the object of every kind of abuse for his supposed cowardice and ungovernable temper. Under these circumstances, unfavorable as they apparently are to any chance of reclamation, it will be determined to get rid of him, and the horse will pass into other hands.

A new order of things now springs up, and, in spite of what the horse has gone through, he will begin to win races, and in a short time put several to his credit. Now the secret is out. The horse at length got into the possession of some one who had the good sense to discover the character of ground upon which he could stretch himself, and hence the result.

It is clear enough there would not be half the number of bad horses, or supposed bad horses, there are if they were properly understood, in the sense

of gratifying the particular desire they may have for work to their liking. It is sheer nonsense, with the intelligence horses possess, to pretend to ignore that they are not endowed with sufficient reason to be able to discriminate the character of ground upon which they can do their best, or which goes best with them.

You have only to observe what I shall choose to call the 'mannerisms' of horses in their work, and now and again you will see some particular animal object to go here or there, but elsewhere he will be quite contented, and will jump off and put heart into his work, going throughout with evident relish. Taking things as you find them, this is always put down to temper, and a horse won't be long before he gets the credit of being a wayward brute, and will be treated as such.

It is, however, any odds on a horse of this character being in the right, and if his course of training, in point of the selction of the ground, were so followed, it would be far better for the horse, and doubly so for his owner. I am quite aware there will be a good many, having charge of horses, who will not be disposed to agree with this manner of treatment, but for all that, I recommend them, for once in a way, to put aside their prejudices and try it.

"Horses for courses and courses for horses" is so old as to be quite proverbial. Its application is general, to *courses* of all kinds, when horses repeat their performances upon them; but it has special significance when applied to *horses*, for the simple reason that it recognizes their adaptability to some particular ground. That these facts should not have become impressed upon the minds of racing people has always struck me as being strange. If horses were singular in this peculiarity, and their performances partook of isolated cases, much need not be said, but we all know there is a constant recurrence at almost every meeting that is held.

I have thought it strange for two reasons. In the first place, it affords a solution to a horse's running capabilities, on a scientific basis, that should have been of material importance to horse owners; while, in the second place, it points so directly to the peculiarities in the natural formation of courses as to afford a positive clue to the vagaries—called in sporting language the "glorious uncertainty"—of racing results, under all kinds of conditions.

CHAPTER V.

HORSES (*continued.*)

In point of distance there is great dissimilarity in the running powers displayed by horses. The majority of those in training are undoubtedly of the "sprinter" or short-distance class, but there are a large number variously described as "middle-class" and "long-distance" runners. Whether a horse belongs to either the one or the other entirely depends on his wind, or lung capacity, and the combined powers possessed in the back and loins. With most horses, however, as we see them, their running distance is an acquired or cultivated art, more than anything else, the course of training being fashioned to suit the character of race those concerned in a horse may prefer to indulge in. With a good many it is not a question of what a horse may be fitted for and made to accomplish, within its, so to speak, "capacity," but something else is designed—I am

afraid only too frequently—for which a horse has no special merit or fitness. For this kind of thing in these days there is really no excuse. It may have been justified in the old days on the grounds of expediency, when £50 plates with four-mile heats existed; but now, thanks to the new rules, there are not only large stakes to be raced for in plenty, but a choice of distance is made to accommodate every class of horse.

I have seen many horses confined to five furlong races that probably should have been raced over longer distances; but this, it is to be hoped, by the well-timed action of the Jockey Club, will be altered in the future. There is no reason why horses, presumably stayers only at five furlongs, should not race equally well over longer distances.

In judging horses' staying powers, it should always be remembered, those that apparently do not get beyond five furlongs are not limited to this distance by failure of muscular power, but from the vacuation of air from the lungs. As a rule, horses that stop at five or six furlongs have small lung capacity, and frequently the only chance of getting them to cover the distance at one "burst" is at high speed from the beginning to the end.

These horses, however, can be made to cover longer distances without difficulty if, instead of the

foolish practice of holding them back and "waiting," as it is termed, they are allowed to travel throughout at high speed, the only difference made being that, at a given point, when they are getting toward the end of a "burst" (say a half-furlong short of the known distance they can stay), they are pulled suddenly up, as though to stop. This momentary action on the part of the jockey recharges the lungs, when the horse will continue the struggle with renewed vigor, and will be found to go on and complete another "burst."

In this way "sprinters," or short-distance horses, can be raced over long distances, provided, of course, proper care is used and the method of "hanging back" and "waiting" is not pursued. When a horse is suddenly pulled up to reinflate the lungs, as I have said, it should be when he is well up in the race; and if done with skill, it will not only be unperceived, but a horse need not lose an inch of ground in the process. But even supposing he does lose a little ground, it will be made up afterward, not merely once, but many times over, by the time the winning-post is reached, should sufficient room be given for the purpose.

It should here be noted it was thought at one time to convert that splendid miler, Victor Wild, into what is called a "cup horse," and in furtherance of

it he was entered and ran for the Ascot Cup of two and a half miles in 1896. There was certainly, it must be said, some good reason for running the horse on the Ascot gradients, for two years previously, viz., in 1894, he had won the Royal Hunt Cup.

It was clear, however, Victor Wild was seen to the best advantage at a mile and on a perfectly flat course; and, as his speed was extraordinary, it could not be expected he would be able to cover two and a half miles, unless pulled up to reinflate his lungs at the end of each mile, or, say, seven and a half furlongs. Had this been done in the manner I have described, there is little doubt Victor Wild would have done the last five furlongs at his usual rate of speed, and without showing any signs of being overdone.

Whilst 99 horses out of every 100 must needs be placed exactly on the character of ground adapted to their requirements, there is even an exception to this supposed rule. This refers to what I may call "all-round" horses; those it is almost impossible to misplace—in the sense of being put on a wrong course—under almost any conditions. You may put them, indeed, on any course, regardless of its climatic state, the weight to be carried, the distance to be run, or the class of the company to be met. Of these, I have only seen one during my experi-

ence, and that is La Fleche, 1889, by St. Simon out of Quiver, the property, during the mare's racing career, of that generous friend of the English people, and withal great philanthropist, the late Baron de Hirsch.

It is quite unnecessary for me, in the present work, to recapitulate the splendid achievements of La Fleche, an animal whose performances on the turf, in my judgment, stand out as unsurpassed, if, indeed, equalled, by any other during the present century. In thus writing, I have not overlooked that La Fleche won races at all distances and at all weights; on courses of all gradients, as well as on the level, and when the ground in point of condition was as hard as a road, or, deluged with rain, of the deepest kind. There is also the fact that she raced four whole seasons, finally quitting the post for the paddock as sound as the day when she was foaled.

As a showyard specimen of the thoroughbred, it is to be doubted if La Fleche would have been "commended" by judges. Built on the most perfect lines for speed and endurance, it always struck me, when looking her over during her racing career, that her model was as near perfection as one may ever hope to see in a race-horse. She was not what is called a "big one," but the colossal strength of her back was most remarkable, while the setting of

the hind-quarters at an angle for speed, to be correctly described, was in itself almost a "freak of nature."

What La Fleche displayed in physical conformation, more especially in construction of frame, she exhibited in action, when fully extended. Her stride, in point of length, was a thing to be remembered for the rest of one's life as quite abnormal in any race-horse. iDiffering from other horses in this respect, it was unrestricted by gradient or by the state the ground happened to be in. A new stride followed an expended one with such rapidity that I can alone describe it to have been like a "flash of lightning."

When this grand mare shall have ended her days, having left, as we hope, some specimens of progeny to enrich our strains of the thoroughbred, as well possibly as to emulate her glorious deeds on the turf, it is also to be hoped that her respected and popular owner may then be induced, in the cause of equine anatomical science, to have her skeleton preserved. And not only preserved, but, above all, anatomically notated, showing both the weight and the measurement, particularly of the spinal structure, that it may hereafter afford a standard guide (on the female side) in point of frame to the highest excellence in the thoroughbred and in a race-horse.

CHAPTER VI.

OWNERS AND TRAINERS.

The responsibilities associated with the duties of a trainer of race-horses are prodigious, if one only takes into account what is committed to his charge in the matter of pounds, shillings and pence. In this, of course, there are questions of degree, for while some may have in their care what may amount in point of value only to a few hundred pounds, there are others, and many of them, in this country who may total a sum to very many thousands, and even to tens of thousands of pounds.

Trainers' responsibilities by no means end with the mere physical duties of training, laborious as they are. They have in numerous cases the entire management of an owner's racing stud. Probably there will be several patrons identified with the stable, all of whom may be described as "large owners," whose interests must severally be an object

of extreme care, and very evenly balanced in matters of honorable understanding, while affairs generally must be made to trend in the direction of reciprocal and trustworthy obligation.

Many trainers are entrusted with the delicate duties of making the entries, involving their patrons in large sums for forfeits, extending from year to year, and in some cases for several years. They have frequently to advise their patrons in matters of policy, more especially concerning the capabilities of their horses, based on a variety of circumstances within their knowledge, and about which their patrons could not otherwise derive necessary information. They have also to keep voluminous accounts, provide for the carrying on of a large correspondence in the general business of the establishment, as well as arrange the somewhat onerous and frequently perplexing duties associated with stable trials.

I do not say that these things exhaust the multifarious duties a trainer in a large way of business has to combat with, but, at any rate, it gives some general idea of what his daily life consists when at home amongst his surroundings.

Elsewhere than at home a trainer's duties are by no means light, for when his horses are running, sometimes at distant places, he needs to be there, not only to watch over the interests of his employer

so far as the welfare of the horses is concerned, but there are endless duties both before racing begins, during its progress, and when it has ended, all of which, in detail, I do not venture, in the capacity of the present work, to enlarge upon.

But, after all, perhaps the most anxious time a trainer has is in the daily work associated with the direction and management of a large stud, what with various horses all differing in peculiarities and characteristics incidental to age, degrees of soundness, and maybe, countless infirmities. All claim his attention with unvarying regularity from early morning till stable duties are brought down to the time when the horses are done up for the night, and the lads and all concerned are thankful to retire to rest.

With a big team, it is a serious business to parcel out the work which has to be done in view of immediate or distant engagements. Every horse's preparation must needs be applicable to the requirements of the horse itself. Those requirements depend on a variety of circumstances, all destined to satisfy the wishes of the employer and the policy to be pursued.

About these affairs there is in some instances much secrecy to be observed, and the trainer is frequently the depository of that which is estimated, on lines suggestive in many cases of preposterous sig-

nificance, of no possible value to the owner or anybody else.

Perhaps I may remark here that the old time-honored practice of maintaining inviolable secrecy in stable affairs, if not a thing of the past, should have been so long ago.

When fifty-pound plates and that racing abomination, "four-mile heats," were the order of the day, there was a sort of legitimate excuse for it; but since all that kind of thing has been swept away by the advent of big stakes and more healthy conditions all round, surely bygone methods, rendered obsolete by force of circumstances, might in a large measure have been swept away too. I do not think, if every vestige of information relating to stable affairs were absolutely laid bare, it would be of the least possible disadvantage, and I firmly believe, as a consequence of it, no owner of racehorses would suffer in the slightest degree. Some persons are apt to think market operations would be unduly influenced if the course suggested were resorted to. I have, however, not the least doubt just the opposite would occur, and that a far healthier tone would prevail, to the advantage of everybody, owners of horses included.

Whether trainers will be induced to adopt the method of ascertaining the exact distance their horses can gallop at a single "burst" or stretch, and

then train them to that particular disance, remains to be seen. How many horses I have known within the space of, say, some half-dozen years that could cover distances, varying from five furlongs to a mile and a quarter, and in a short time became utterly ruined through being raced out of their distance, and on gradients upon which their powers were almost useless, I should be afraid to say, but they would run into a large number.

There is hardly a more sensitive animal than a race-horse, and few with half his intelligence. At five furlongs you might have a colt possessing very great speed on a level course. Your trainer, and yourself probably too, might have thought that he can be made a useful miler. Accordingly he is trained for it, and galloped on all sorts of gradients—which are supposed to develop his muscles in the right places, strengthen his wind, and make him stay. Before very long you are told the colt is not doing well. He has shown currishness in his work, and at times refuses to gallop. He is sent, notwithstanding, to take his chance in a mile race, with the result that he gets hopelessly beaten. If he is not now sold for what he will fetch, he returns home to undergo the usual corrective—viz., to be added to the list.

In ninety-nine cases out of every hundred of this kind the fault is in the training and management of

the colt, it being, for some unaccountable reason, quite overlooked that you cannot give a horse what he does not possess in nature, you can only develop what Nature has given him.

If this were acted up to, how few worthless horses compared to the present would pass out of trainers' hands! And as for racing, what an improvement we should see! I have in recollection a number of horses of which great hopes were entertained, but for some unexpected cause their career was suddnly cut short.

A case in point was that of Ingebrigt, a horse still in training as a jumper. As a two and three year old, I knew him as one of the fastest animals I ever timed over five furlongs on a level course. He was built on the right lines for that class of work, and for no other. He won his races so easily and with so much go that he was pronounced a stayer and, as was stated at the time, capable of better things, and to that end, almost as a matter of course, his attention was directed. Now came what I may call a "struggle between man and beast," for the colt, according to report, resented the treatment, and had in the end to undergo the corrective referred to, preparatory to being trained for hurdle-racing. It is needless to say his career as a first-class "sprinter" was over, and what promised to be one of the finest of records in that line of business was doomed to

utter disappointment. The last time that I ever cared to look at the horse again was after he had been put to hurdle-jumping, and was sent to run in a race up the hill at Sandown Park. And what a sorry exhibition it was! I had seen him go with the dash of a rocket over ground that was as Nature intended. Here, on gradients which Nature, in his case at least, never intended, he ran, to my thinking, as helpless as a cab-horse, and with about the same look of discouragement.

It is impossible to say, with a horse of the temperament of Ingebrigt when at three years of age, what would have been the result if his sensitiveness had been humored, to the extent that he would never have been galloped or raced on other than level ground, and not beyond, in point of distance, five or six furlongs. Built on lines wholly for speed, with "recoil" so prompt that the strength of his back must have been prodigious, one marvels that a horse possessing special characteristics like this should be taken out of his sphere, and put to accomplish things for which he is wholly unfitted. This compels me to say that, in this particular, the art of training appears to fail in a way not to be expected, seeing the results of experience and good judgment in other directions.

As a rule, owners seldom exhibit skill or judgment

in the placing of their horses, though in this respect I am aware there are very notable exceptions. For owners making mistakes of the kind there are legitimate excuses; but when it is known that if entries are not made by trainers in their behalf, it is done under the guidance, and most probably at the suggestion, of the latter, then it is primarily trainers, and trainers only, who are to be blamed for the blunders that are made.

It is lamentable, in a sense, when one goes, as I so often do, to enjoy racing as the most exhilarating and delightful of all outdoor sports, to observe so many *ill-placed* horses in the events that come on for decision in the course of a single day.

In this respect it is no common thing to see a beautiful horse, full of points for a race he is in, revel in delight at his work, and win at his ease. Here was a happy selection of ground, a straightaway course, and not very far removed from the level. On another occasion I may see him as fit and as bright-looking as a star. He goes to the post not quite so jauntily, probably not liking the ground. One sees him get well away and come on in front till he reaches the hill, when he suddenly falters and loses his place. Hard driven, one will see him still struggle on, but to be beaten for speed, and to return to weigh in apparently downcast and discouraged.

This to a large extent is typical of the happening of events in racing. One has applied the watch, which is unerring in the information it gives, only to discover the utter want of analogy between the races themselves and between the performances of the horse. The first of these races will probably have been run at a high rate of speed; while in the latter case, after allowing for the gradients and making a careful comparison of previous running over the same ground, it will be found the speed was slow, and the performance even of the winner of little merit.

CHAPTER VII.

JOCKEYS.

As a rule, jockeys are a much-abused class—that is, when they do not win, though they are much belauded when they do. This, I am afraid, is the fate of other people as well as jockeys. Perverseness is not a characteristic of the public in general; but when the money is on, who is not perverse should the happening of events not accord with preconceived anticipations?

The art of race-riding has not undergone many changes, at least in this country, during the past half-century, and I think the jockeys of to-day compare favorably with those we have seen of late years. The methods of Fordham and Archer, which were original methods in recent times, have been perpetuated in the younger generation of jockeys, and so far, in the matter of race-riding, may be said to have satisfied the requirements of both owners

and trainers pretty consistently. The advent, however, of the American jockeys—Sims and Rieff, and more recently Sloan—so altered the complexion of things by the style of riding they introduced that, unless our jockeys can show us something fresh—something we have yet been unacquainted with—it will be difficult for them in public estimation, I think, to keep pace with present surroundings.

Some time ago, Sims and Rieff showed the British racing public what they could do in the saddle; but these jockeys, skilled as they were, cannot be said to have then had a very appreciative audience. Their style of riding, the manner of placing themselves on the back of the horse, was new, and being new was rather derided in consequence, especially by old-fashioned, out-of-date people. But perhaps the worst that has to be said is that nobody, not even one among the most experienced horsemen in the country, could be found to be able to make the discovery that there was scientfic method in it. I do not say they were unwilling to learn, but the fact is the style did not please, and consequenly they saw comparatively little to merit approbation. The result was these two good jockeys got no riding outside their own stable, and it never came to my knowledge they were offered a mount by any one to enable them to show what they

could do on English horses. With some few exceptions the running of the American horses during the season to which I refer was a little disappointing. The explanation given was that they were unused to our English grass tracks, but for my part I did not think the horses were by any means fully acclimatized. For all that, these two jockeys put in some smart riding, and under the watch made our English style look comparatively small. They rode as Sloan always rides, viz., *to time*, a method which makes a visible impression when the winning-post is reached, for, instead of being on a beaten horse, there is generally plenty left to finish with, and most likely something to spare.

With reference to the riding-seat of the jockeys I have mentioned, and to which so much exception is taken, I have personally not been a little surprised its advantages have not been more readily recognized. Never having seen the style of riding put to practical test before the American jockeys introduced it here, I cannot be accused of being unduly influenced in its favor; but feeling convinced that riding in the way these jockeys did there was reason for it, and that, too, on probably substantial grounds, I was soon able to discover its meaning. It must be quite understood I do not enter into the controversy which took place

some time ago in the sporting press on this subject; and, furthermore, that I do not venture to reply to the very foolish letters that were published, not one of which was a credit to the sagacity of the writer.

The forward seat on the withers, with the legs thrust still more forward and the head and shoulders poised over the horse's neck, to enable the hands to almost touch the bit in his mouth, is in itself devised to avoid all possible wind-pressure against the body of the rider. At the same time remove every ounce of weight that can be from the saddle, that it may not impede the natural curve of the back of the horse as it rises and falls (in his stride), to permit the full underreach and propulsion from the hind-quarters—in successive order like a piece of machinery—as he gallops.

There is surely no one in charge of horses, or, I may say, acquainted with horses, who does not know that the back of a horse as he gallops bends or curves to almost reach the point of a half-circle. Without this 'curve' it would be impossible to get underreach, and without underreach a horse is practically without speed.

If anybody doubts—or, to put it milder, is unacquainted with—the extent to which a horse 'curves' his back when galloping, and the effect

it has upon his speed, let him get on something that can go a bit and chase a loose horse in a field, and if that animal does not show him all I have expressed he will be blind indeed. As a hunting man, intimately acquainted with horses all my life, and having had experience of them under almost every condition, I do not think one would be able to boast much of one's alphabetical knowledge in the matter of horse-lore should I not have made the discovery long ago that speed, whether of high or of low degree in horses, was the outcome, or derived from, the spinal construction of the animal frame.

A horse possessing very great speed must necessarily have abnormal spinal structure wherewith to effect what I must call 'prompt recoil action' so soon as the full hind-quarter leverage has been expended. This 'recoil,' this recovery to the original position after the full power of the whole frame has been exerted, it should always be remembered, is the initial or primary condition of speed in horses.

In the course of a single season how constantly we see it represented that certain horses have 'lost their speed.' And do we not also see those animals going from bad to worse, without a suggestion they are troubled with any kind of unsoundness? If it were fair to their owners to do so, I think it would

be attended with little difficulty to mention the names of a number of horses within a given time that have most sensibly 'lost speed,' and all of them, with scarcely an exception, from the same cause. These stride out quite evenly, and apparently with plenty of vigor, but the 'recoil' is slow, and if you watch it closely, you will observe it to be intermittent, and finally to unmistakably 'dwell,' as the horse continues to gallop.

When a horse, so to speak, *lingers* or *dwells* in his stride in the way I have described, the retention of a certain fixed rate of speed is out of the question, and as this infirmity increases he becomes slower and slower as time goes on.

Then, again, how often we hear it stated, and also see it in print, that during a race a certain horse had 'turned it up' or 'cut it when the pinch came,' but for which he 'undoubtedly would have won.' This is always set down to be an exhibition of temper, and many a good horse has paid the penalty of his sex in consequence of it, and been from thence on transformed into a jumper.

Now, what is the origin of this failure in 'recoil,' this 'lingering or dwelling' by a horse in his stride, which I have ventured to stigmatize as an 'infirmity'? The origin or seat of ailment—if such it can be called—may best be stated as a weakening or slackening of the spinal structure, the mus-

cular fibre of the back and loins being a part of that which I have so described. What may be the precise anatomical effect produced on this vital part of a horse's organization I am not prepared to say certainly from a scientific point of view. From a physical point, and from observation and general study, I have long arrived at the conclusion that it is wholly caused by excessive training and undue riding in races on gradients for which a horse may not have the least possible natural aptitude or qualification.

When a horse has 'lost speed,' it is generally supposed he is short of work. The universal practice then is to increase his gallops, and the training art will endeavor to wring more out of him by its means. When this is done, the horse drifts from bad to worse, and the more fast work he is put to do, the sooner his career on the turf comes to an end.

I have often made the inquiry of owners, trainers, and also jockeys, in order to discover, from their point of view, in what part of a horse's organization, taking him from head to foot, he most feels the effect when he is beaten ("all out," as the term is), in a race, fixing the distance at five furlongs, or say any distance up to two and a half miles. I cannot say my fund of information has

been much enhanced by doing this. Some think one thing and some another, but I never got anything definite or reliable upon the subject, except, perhaps, the following, from one of the old hands amongst the jockeys. Said he: "When a horse is beat, he's beat, and it don't take us long to find that out when we wants him to finish."

Generally speaking, I think racing people are of opinion that at the end of a five-furlong race a horse feels more distressed in his wind than elsewhere, mostly on account of his blowing pretty freely. When, however, you have to remember that a horse having great speed takes 1 min. 2 sec. to 2 1-2 sec. to cover a distance of five furlongs on the level, and that the shorter the time, the better and fresher he is at the finish, one dare not be too certain the conclusions arrived at are altogether well founded.

But there is this also to remember: A horse running at high speed does not breathe from the lungs in covering a distance of five furlongs, his respiration being entirely confined to the head and throat, so that his "wind," in the sense in which it is put, is comparatively unaffected by the exertion. There cannot be the least doubt that horses in all cases charge their lungs with as much air as is possible on setting off, as it were, in preparation for any ex-

ertion that is to come. If the exertion is not acute, the air passes out of the lungs, and is replenished at will. When, however, the exertion becomes suddenly acute, as in jumping off and galloping on at high pressure, the stock of air with which the lungs are charged exhausts, in proportion to the power of retention a horse may possess, pending the opportunity of replenishing the lungs, and through the lungs the entire system, with a new supply.

As a horse is only able to gallop so long as the lungs remain charged with air, it must always be a question with all horses when running at high speed how long this supply will last. That horses differ to a large extent in lung capacity is well known, but it must not be overlooked it is *duration of time*, rather than *rate of speed*, that must always determine the maximum extent of a horse's powers. In this respect a curious fact arises, and as it is indisputable, I cannot too strongly impress it upon jockeys, as well as upon all persons interested in racing. It is this—and I have constantly found it to be so—a horse having won a five or six furlong race in very fast time, finishing full of running, when again running over the same ground, under the same conditions, and some three or four seconds longer time is taken in the duration of the race, has not only figured among the beaten horses, but pulled up very much distressed. Horses al-

ways show distress when they pull up at the end of five or six furlongs after a slow-run race, and just the contrary when the speed has been fast.

The lung capacity in horses is necessarily a difficult question, but I am far from saying it cannot be pretty accurately ascertained. On a straight and level course I should fix one and a quarter miles, or ten furlongs, as the extreme limit a horse is able to gallop at high speed on the stock of air with which he has supplied himself on jumping off in a race. It is far more accurate, however, to gauge it, as I have said, by "period of time" than by distance; and when high speed has been maintained, I have found the distance covered at the expiration of a given time to be extremely correct.

Everybody who goes racing has experienced the very great discrepancy there is in the result between races run at a high rate of speed and those run at a low rate, or, say, in the latter case, according to the beau-ideal method so popular with very many people—viz., to "wait, and then make one run or dash at the finish." Races so run must necessarily have a totally different result, and they always have. It is ridiculous to suppose the same horse would win in either case, or that the same horses would be placed even in both instances. And, then, what happens in races in this respect up to a dis-

tance of one and a quarter miles would be different in result with another set of horses in races of one and a half miles and upwards. In the latter—that is to say, in races of one and a half miles and upwards—the discrepancy would not be so great, for it is quite possible, whether these be run fast or slow, the same horse may win, and the same horses likewise may be placed.

Referring to the former cases, in races up to one and a quarter miles, at a *high rate* of speed, these are run under conditions that do not allow a recharging of air in a horse's lungs, and the *shorter* the time that is taken to cover the distance, the more certain will be the result. If the same race should be run at *low* speed or on the "one run or dash" idea, the process of waiting so highly thought of may or may not enable a horse to recharge with air. Should a horse happen to be successful in this, he will be the winner.

In slow-run races at five furlongs, for instance, if you see a horse "drop from the clouds" as the saying is, and, to the astonishm nt of everybody, come out and win by lengths at the finish, and then hardly blow enough to put out a candle, this animal by some means, possibly by accident, got his lungs recharged with air, while all the other horses failed to do so. If it is, therefore, desirable to cherish the fossil idea of the "glorious uncer-

tainty" in racing, jockeys will continue to "wait and come with one run or dash at the finish;" but I am hoping, by what is set out in the pages of this work, I may to some small extent help to "screw the neck" of that long-continued and, I may add, egregious folly.

I can only infer that races of one and a half miles and upwards are not run without reinflating the lungs. Our English method of riding this kind of races in every way favors the idea that horses do reinflate, or, as I have said, "recharge," the rate of speed not being so fast as to prevent it. Furthermore, we have no straightaway mile and a half courses, and where there are turns and necessities for easing up in running, horses invariably can manage to get some air in. When they can do this, they do not get beaten very readily.

In the matter of race-riding, however, jockeys, it would seem, are as yet a longish way from having acquired the necessary knowledge of the subject to enable them to accomplish the task of reinflating a horse's lungs, quite apart from the somewhat delicate art of effecting it at the right or critical moment.

Consistent with rather ancient, and I am afraid prejudiced, notions, they too often prefer to sit still in the saddle, and in many cases pull and

dodge their mount about, until in long races he has spun himself out. When this happens, and the horse cannot be driven to reach the winning-post (making practically only a poor show at the finish), the same old story always comes up to account for it. "The horse had a bit the worst of the weights, and could not quite get home. He was short a gallop or two, perhaps, but will do better next time."

While horses of sufficient lung capacity can be trained and ridden to run their races at various distances up to one and a quarter miles at high speed without reinflating the lungs, so by the adoption of the process of reinflation, as I have said, horses can be trained and ridden to run at high speed any distance upwards prescribed by the rules of racing.

To say that English jockeys cannot ride on these lines would certainly be very unfair to them, especially when we know how many of them are endowed with keen observation and no inconsiderable intelligence. But whether they will find a means of breaking away from the old style, and in its place have recourse to the scientific methods Sloan has favored us with, which I have ventured to point out, remains to be seen. Instead of the suicidal policy of "waiting"—a policy Sloan does not put into practice—perhaps they will be induced to re-

fleet on the manner of riding that jockey displayed in the Liverpool Cup last autumn on perhaps, in point of merit, not one of the best animals running in the race, in time as bad as could be. However, experience tells us that jockey knows how to inflate a horse's lungs as a race proceeds, and any one taking the trouble to ascertain the result of it will readily find it amongst the records of the past season. He rode winner after winner that should not have been winners, at least on those occasions, if the idea of merit was worth anything.

It will be of interest, perhaps, and at the same time in a way tend to illustrate what I have previously written, if I refer to the running of Peter, a horse that achieved a famous victory in the Royal Hunt Cup at Ascot nearly twenty years ago, in the then popular colors of that fine sportsman, Sir John B. Astley, Bart.

Of this splendid success, rendered historic by sporting writers of every degree, the simple facts, as I have always understood them, were these. After being backed by his owner, and, indeed, by many others, to win a large stake (so popular was anything carrying the canary jacket in those days), the horse only got home, to land them their money, after stopping to kick whilst the race was being run, and when the field had got about half way through the journey.

That a horse should have possessed such sterling qualities, having been left behind the entire field of runners, to have been able to rejoin his horses, and win with 9 st. 4 lb. on his back notwithstanding, has been the theme of many a pen, brimming over with enthusiasm, from that day to this.

But they have always forgotten to tell us that, had it not been for this stopping to kick, or whatever the horse did, no Peter would have won that day. As a matter of fact, he stopped to put his head down, and the "kicking" really existed only in the imagination of the writers. It can never be known what actually caused the horse to stop, but it is quite certain he was dead settled as far as racing was concerned when he did so. There can be no doubt of this, however, that he put his head down to take in air, and, being a horse that carried his head high, was not able to get beyond five furlongs on the Ascot gradients. He won, as horses are able to do when the wind is in them, but are helpless when their lungs are empty.

But perhaps one of the most remarkable wins to be seen from a big field of horses of late years was that Rockdove in the Cesarewitch of 1895. All along that splendid piece of galloping ground, from the point where they come into view after passing the ditch, Rockdove was going so well that defeat seemed impossible. However, nearing the

Rowley Mile Stand, she was observed to falter, then swerve to the left, or near side, and momentarily stop. With a bound, however, the mare was in her stride again, and, renewing the struggle with as it were a fresh start, she dashed past the post full of running, winning comparatively in a canter. To have done this tells how dead settled every other horse in the race was, and the snail's pace at which they were going.

Why did Rockdove stop? Why was it that at the end of two and a quarter miles she was able to finish so full of running, and as a question of form accomplish a performance she was never equal to either before or after during her career on the turf?

The answers to these questions are necessarily obvious. As in Peter's case, the mare was, at the point where she stopped, equally settled, but accidentally getting her lungs recharged, the previous exertion was of little consequence, and she was ready for another "burst" of one and a quarter miles, probably as fresh as when she started. I have said the fact of the mare getting air into her lungs was "accidental," and I believe that to be so. It cannot be said the method of riding by the jockey contributed anything to invest the mare with new running powers, except by accident, for so far our jockeys even now have not acquired the art of

doing that which it is by no means common for horses, when they get the chance, to do for themselves.

But, after all, where would Rockdove have been in the race had the jockeys on other horses been able to do for them what the mare in question had done for herself?

Horses, as I have said before, having the most capacious lungs cannot get beyond a mile and a quarter in a fast run race on a level course without a fresh supply, and when there are gradients they cannot get that distance, or anything like it.

From the same point of view I may take the running of Georgie at Manchester, in the Cambridgeshire, and in the Old Cambridgeshire, last autumn. At the first named place there is no doubt that, at the speed at which the race was run, it was accomplished at one burst without reinflation of the lungs.

In the Cambridgeshire there is also no doubt it was done at one "burst," and the watch quite clearly made it to be so. In the Old Cambridgeshire the mare ran with one "burst" only, and without reinflation she just got the running distance, as would be shown to be a mile and a quarter on the level, beyond which, as the race was run, she could not be expected to go.

The winner Nunsuch was ridden by Sloan, who

did not fail to reinflate the filly's lungs, I should expect, somewhere about the Red Post when he got there, and as a consequence she won by ten lengths. Had Sloan ridden Georgie, and reinflated as I have said, that mare would have won by ten lengths instead of the other.

We in this country are universally supposed to be scientific and practical, and I believe in most things we are, but in the matter of race-riding we certainly are not. There would be no difficulty in giving numerous instances of horses' running confirming what I have above set out, but I think the particulars I have given need not be enlarged upon.

With reference to the system of race-riding our jockeys pursue, it has to be expressly pointed out how very little the teaching of anatomical science has hitherto been of advantage to them. Jockeys, we know, ride to orders. Apart from this, we do not forget they have served a long probationary period in a training stable, to learn their business, where, under the watchful eye of the trainer, who may have been a jockey himself, they have the best of guidance in every branch of their calling.

It is frequently said people "expect too much of jockeys." That, as they are as capable now as jockeys have ever been, should be deemed sufficiently satisfactory. I am certainly not one who would

seek to disparage their efforts in any way; but for all that, I do not shut my eyes to there being much room for improvement. There is room for scientific advancement in the art of race-riding, and I should be no friend to them or their calling if I did not say so. It is out of the question they will ever go back to the time when one of their order evinced his intelligence in describing a horse as "a thing with four legs, like a table;" but for all that, race-riding to be a perfect art must be capable of much more than we have seen. As an instance of this, as showing the shortcomings of race-riding in one particular only, without going into others that are present to me as I write, take the case of a jockey riding what is called a "waiting race," and the effect it has from a practical, as well as from a scientific, point of view. In thus riding, by force of circumstances, a jockey is compelled to sit back in the saddle. If the horse is not a puller, and only needs to be "steadied," the weight in the seat of the saddle impedes the "curve" in the back of the horse, by which his stride is shortened to the extent that in a race of five furlongs only, several lengths will be lost. If the horse is only a moderate puller, the act of holding against the horse has the effect not only of shortening the horse's stride to the extent I have said, but it becomes a lever, with the seat in the saddle as the fulcrum, against the curve

in the back of the horse. And not only is the stride shortened the more the horse pulls, and an increased distance of ground lost, but the pressure caused by the leverage becomes equivalent to more than doubling the weight otherwise to be carried.

It is a fact that horses exhaust the more quickly as the pressure against the curve in the back is enforced, by the waste of energy that necessarily is created.

There is nothing so detrimental to success in racing, as Lord Durham said, as "waste of energy." Upon this point, I very strongly recommend jockeys to ascertain for themselves what the loss of an inch or two in a horse's stride amounts to at the end of a race, say at all racing distances.

It is a simple arithmetical calculation that obviously will be of the greatest possible value to them.

As the length horses stride in their gallop differs so very materially, my calculation can only be based on average. However, taking it at that, it may be safely put that for *every inch* a horse loses in his stride in a race of five furlongs he will be a length in arrear, and will consequently have a length, or it may be many lengths, to make up at the finish. Races at longer distances increase proportionately, except in the case of a very short-striding horse, when the loss will be greater.

A hard-pulling horse, by the process of "waiting," would lose about ten inches per stride. I have seen them lose much more than this, but I think ten inches may be reckoned a fair average.

I have said in a previous chapter that Sloan's method of riding was "riding to time," or, in the words of Lord Durham, "to cover the allotted distance of ground in the shortest time." That this is correct in principle there cannot be any doubt, and for two very important reasons. In the first place, it obviates all chance of "waste of energy" in the horse; while in the second it enables every atom of physical strength a horse has got within him to be utilized to the utmost possible advantage. Riding to "time" is essentially a steady rate of progression at *high*, as distinguished from *excessive*, speed from start to finish.

As far as it is possible, a horse should be ridden with an evenness and regularity, which perhaps may be best described, or explained by way of illustration, as an arrow or bullet travels through the air. When, however, a horse is a hard puller, as very many are, he should under no circumstances, provided there is plenty of room and he is not at the heels of another horse, be hard held or pulled and hauled about.

At high, or indeed at excessive, speed, should the horse of himself have set it, he should be al-

lowed to continue, the effort of the jockey being, so far as the horse is concerned, alone directed to keeping him steady in his stride, and to steering him into the best available berth without risk of infringing the rules.

It is to be feared, amongst the rising generation of jockeys, comparatively little is being done to teach them scientific riding, adopting Sloan's style as a model. What will be the course of things in the future it is impossible to say.

During the past season, however, I was on the lookout for any newcomer who presented himself, and amongst all the apprentices I only saw one capable of grasping the idea. This appeared to be a very promising youngster, by name J. Forest, said to have been schooled by Brown, who trains somewhere near Royston. The lad was badly mounted; but I was pleased to see he rode exactly to reproduce the correct style. I noticed, too, "the special commissioner" made favorable mention of the lad's riding, so we may hope not only to see him again when there is riding on, but again setting an example on all hands so worthy to be followed.

CHAPTER VIII.

HANDICAPS.

It cannot be long now before the whole system of handicapping must be dealt with. It is found, and has been for a considerable time past, to be extremely unsatisfactory, and to work on lines nobody seems to clearly understand.

The late Major Egerton was a most assiduous handicapper, and he was thought by very many to have a special gift in the art of adjusting the balance, as is were, between notoriously bad horses and those having form and creditable running credentials, with which he had to deal in framing a handicap. When he failed, as I am afraid he often did, to give satisfaction to numerous owners, it was certainly no fault of his; for, as far as human ingenuity could go, that estimable and gallant gentleman's efforts were directed in the most upright and painstaking course.

In no sense could he be called an unjust or vin-

dictive handicapper; yet, looking over the results of his labors, there were certainly times when owners could hardly feel assured they had been fairly dealt with. The fact is, it was not the gallant Major who was open to reproach; it was rather the principle upon which handicaps were founded, and handicapping of itself carried out, not only by him, but by many others, both before and since his time.

I am not aware there are any prescribed rules in the matter or manner of framing a handicap, the principle, as most people understand it, being a careful and well-noted-up particular of every horse's form whose name figures in the entry, accompanied with practical observation of the relative merits of each horse's previous running and what he may or may not be capable of under conditions applicable to the event then under consideration. That it went beyond what may be called "an educated estimate" can hardly be supposed, but there is little doubt, as far as general opinion went, it was perhaps the most rational method that could be devised, in view of the very great difficulty there naturally would be in endeavoring to give satisfaction to all parties immediately concerned.

Another view has been to adjust the weights in a handicap on a sort of sliding-scale basis, by which a

horse was to be judged by taking the best form he had given evidence of, and practically the worst, and thereupon strike a sort of balance between the two. This, as a means of getting at a horse's correct form, might be satisfactory to a certain class of people, but it strikes one as being unreliable, to say the least, and I should think extremely haphazard into the bargain. Whether this method of arriving at a supposed just conclusion has been acted upon by handicappers I cannot say with certainty, but I should imagine it to be very doubtful.

But the extraordinary thing about handicapping is that it misses the mark in what it intends to effect. If the idea of a handicap is to so adjust the weights as to put all the horses engaged in the race on an equal footing, and at the same time give every one a fair chance of success, that is just what it does not do. This, no doubt, to a large number of persons will read as probably somewhat strange, not because they may not have thought out the subject for themselves, but rather because it is directly opposed to a system they may have been familiar with, if not wholly satisfied with, practically all their lives.

It must be said, however, that handicaps on the present system of adjusting weights fail in two very material respects. First, they fail to equalize the respective chances of the horses engaged in a race,

being framed on the presumption of running on the level, and without regard to the necessities or the requirements of gradient; and in the second, they fail to apportion weight in accordance with correct running distance, surface measurement not being running distance on any course not strictly a level course.

In view of the first of these propositions, it cannot be contended that handicaps are framed otherwise than on what I may call "paper" results, or as results come out and appear in guide book form, it may be months, or possibly the following year, after some particular race has taken place. In other words, a head or a length beating is the same for all practical purposes in the matter of adjusting weights, quite irrespective of the course where the results in question happened to have occurred. So far as the ground or course is concerned, there is absolutely no distinction ever made. The figures particular beatings remain just the same as they have been for any period of time; yet new courses are constantly made, and a new set of gradients brought into use, to be raced upon year by year.

What difference is made in handicapping between a head or a length beating on a level course, and the same results when the race has been run on a steep incline? Positively none. Yet supposing the same

horses have run under precisely the same conditions on both courses, there would not only be a different result, so far as the winning horses are concerned, for contemplation, but it is more than probable the winner on the level would not be placed on the incline, and the winner on the incline would not be placed on the level.

Now take a course where there is a decline, such as at Epsom, Lingfield, Brighton and other places, and here you will have a totally different result again; and if you expect the winner on either the level or the incline to show to advantage on this occasion, the chances are that both will be out of it before the distance is reached. Of course, in these cases I am assuming the state of the ground to be dry; but, on the other hand, should it be wet, say in a sodden state, then I think those who venture on a basis of calculation must be sanguine to a degree slightly beyond ordinary conception.

Then again, by way of further example of what handicapping in a large measure consists, take the condition of things we find relative to a race, it may be, on the Royal Hunt Cup course at Ascot. Here we have 7 furlongs and 166 yards surface measurement. In framing a handicap for this course it must necessarily be on the basis of this particular distance. With some seventy or eighty horses in

the entry, the weights are by force of circumstances allotted on the running form shown by each horse, as it may have been disclosed on all manner of courses and under all sorts of conditions.

Among the number to be weighted are horses proved stayers on level courses up to seven furlongs, and they may be trusted perhaps to even get a mile. Attracted by the conditions, and especially the distance to be run, these horses get supported in the market by both owners and those who are not owners, with the result, when the race comes to be fought out, they make practically no show, winding up, indeed, in most disappointing fashion. Then, of course, comes the usual howl of discontent, and all sorts of unkind things said touching the *bona fides* of everybody concerned, and this without any substantial reason.

Horses that have done good things and carried big burdens on the flat are easily weighted out of it at Ascot, simply because they cannot act on the gradients they find there. But there is another and perhap a more serious difficulty to encounter. The running distance, as compared with 7 furlongs and 166 yards surface measurement, makes the distance of the Royal Hunt Cup course, on the level, to require something like a furlong more doing than appears, and this very naturally settles the pretensions of horses of the character I have described.

As I have said, taking the running form of horses gauged by their performances on all kinds of courses, under all sorts of conditions, a handicap framed on the basis in point of distance of 7 furlongs and 166 yards must necessarily be incorrect relatively in regard to merit, and quite useless in the sense that each horse has been given a fair chance. In handicaps even of this character we occasionally see, as a matter of course, horses perhaps weighted at almost the top and the bottom coming together at the finish, divided, it may be, by a head or a neck.

When this happens—and it would be strange indeed if it did not happen occasionally—we are treated on all sides to a sort of rhapsody of praise and exultation, and the triumph of the handicapper is extolled to a degree almost to be sickening. Well merited praise is naturally approved by everybody disposed to be generous, but when one knows such a result to be little less than a chance shot, with jockeys riding in waiting at each other's heels, and not venturing to make a race of it in many cases till only the last few strides, one cannot help thinking much of the enthusiasm displayed on these occasions might with advantage be just a trifle restrained, or at any rate reserved for something more worthy of it.

However, looking at the results of handicapping from every point of view, especially in the true interest of racing, it becomes a question of the greatest importance whether it would not be better to endeavor to discover some other, and, should it be possible, a far better method of determining the weight, under all circumstances, horses shall carry to bring each and every one into contest on fair terms. In my humble judgment, we should see better racing, more fair play, and an increased measure of sport, if handicaps were wholly done away with.

I believe that, on the principle of dividing horses of three years and upward into classes, and apportioning the weight to be carried in all races now under handicap conditions in accordance with merit would work out well. Such a principle would be devoid of all imputation of unfairness, and in the future would put a stop to such exhibitions as seen last autumn in the Derby Cup, when a horse which had been run out fairly and squarely on his merits was made to concede an animal of his own age, of undoubted, though at the same time unknown, merit, no less than 39 lbs., and at a period of the year, too, that favored the latter's sex.

As an incident in the supposed "science" of handicapping, this, unfortunately, is only one of many

similar in character that crop up season after season, until it is sincerely to be hoped the time has arrived when, in the interest of sport, it will cease to be tolerated. I make not the remotest suggestion of wrong-doing in the case referred to, but nevertheless the idea rather extensively prevails that, under the present handicap system, an animal possessing extraordinary racing capabilities only needs to be kept in reserve long enough to descend in the handicap scale until the minimum impost of *6 st. is certain to be reached.

When this happens, as I am afraid it does oftener than we think, the wrong that is done is most serious in numerous directions. Perhaps, however, the worst feature of all is, when a race with a horse so handicapped comes off, the scandal it creates, people having to witness every means being resorted to to prevent the horse in question squandering the field and coming in alone.

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*St. (stone) is equivalent to 14 lbs.

CHAPTER IX.

WEIGHTS.

The principle of fixing or determining the weight horses shall carry in races, refined by the term "handicap," is, as everybody more or less knows, founded on "estimate." That is to say, the best opinion that can be arrived at of respective merit derived from a study of relative form.

How that opinion shall be arrived at, must necessarily be open to question. Not in one direction only, but in very many. What may be a horse's merit, gauged by relative running with other horses, must needs depend on a variety of circumstances in the result all more or less obscure.

If races were run on a single course at prescribed distances and on the level, assuming the ground not to be liable to climatic change, it may be quite

possible to handicap a given number of horses by computation of weight on equal competitive terms. But to make this apply as a matter of principle, without reservation, to all horses, would be futile in the extreme.

As I have pointed out, I am afraid by too frequent repetition, there are only a limited number of horses having racing merit not confined to a particular character of ground. Thus, when it has to be borne in mind that every course differs, the practical assimilation of weight, to satisfy all conditions on this score alone, if not beyond human conception, must needs drift into that sphere, when coupled with it are the characteristics and adaptabilities of horses to ground, subject to climatic variety or change, such as is experienced.

Handicaps by the method employed of adjusting the weight horses shall carry over a certain distance of ground, may have advantages in providing amusement as an equine spectacle. When put forward, however, to be regarded as a sound and reliable test of the merits of horses on a basis of that which is equal, and upon which calculation can foreshadow results, hardly coincides with views I should care to indulge in, or if called upon express what I thought.

When people enjoy racing for racing's sake, it is

because it enables them to see the very best strains of the thoroughbred the world can produce, brought into contest under circumstances Nature intended.

When the contest is upon terms that are *equal*, their pleasure is enhanced; when it is *unequal*, as in handicaps, where the weights offer no sort of guarantee to the contrary of this, they can only feel that the conditions have changed, and as a result hope for better things on some other occasion.

The fact is, there is no such thing as racing on equal terms on the basis of "estimate."

Suppose every course to be surveyed and the running distances reduced by ordinary computation (to which I have referred in the chapter on Courses), to come out at the level, and the stated distances to be run over made the actual distance or length of course at the level, it must not be overlooked there is then the adaptability of every horse in the entry to the particular gradient to be adjusted, for which weight in no sense can be said to provide.

There are, in every handicap entry, horses of varied running characteristics, such as I endeavored to illustrate in the respective running of Best Man and Georgie, that no course and no weight would bring together to race on equal terms, for the simple reason that on a particular character of ground the one horse would win, while the same

would apply elsewhere in the case of the other, with little or no chance of being able to prevent it.

It was seen, as I have said, in the Derby Cup, how a difference of 39 lbs. between two horses of the same age was made to afford a basis of "estimate," but if this was supposed to be racing on equal terms, and to satisfy the aims of racing in the sense of "legitimate sport," I think, like a good many others, I should not be induced to travel very far to witness such exhibitions.

The idea which has always prevailed of making the conditions in racing such as will bring the "good and the bad" horses together, however acceptable in theory, is subject, nevertheless, to much reservation in practice. A four-year-old at the top of a handicap and a five-year-old at the bottom, placed at a difference of about 3 st. (42 lbs.), if it does not shock one's notion of fair play, rather conveys to one's understanding that something is wrong.

There is a limit within which a handicapper must range, in fixing the weights at the top and the bottom, but so far as age is concerned, there is no limit, or indeed anything to disallow a three-year-old being placed at the top, and an aged horse at the bottom, should their respective capabilities appear to sanction it on the basis of "estimate."

One cannot help thinking the "idea" of "good and

bad" horses being brought together needs considerable modification. Supposed "bad horses," and treated as such, are only too often good ones in disguise. That which allows "good and bad" horses to be brought together not only fosters the concealment of merit, but is a direct inducement to wrong-doing, especially when seemingly it outrages fair play. In principle, as well as in the interests of racing, there is nothing to encourage, or even to make desirable, the fact of *bad* horses racing with those of the first class, on any terms whatever.

On strict lines, the idea of racing should be to bring into contest, into entry for certain races, horses of particular class and suitability for the ground upon which the races are to take place.

Whatever the prize offered may be, the conditions should make the chances of horses more a matter of scientific investigation and study by those interested in them, than the haphazard character racing represents on the model prescribed by the handicap system.

So far as "investigation and study" have hitherto gone in the matter of handicap racing, I think any one would be open to be accused of very bold assertion if he was prepared to say these were not confined to the work of the handicapper in allotting the weights. As an instance of it, I have known

many owners—and trainers, too—who, in the course of conversation, would have at their fingers' ends a most graphic knowledge of every detail affording a "line" to the compilation of a handicap. I have known them, besides, to be able off-hand to trace out in a most masterly manner from memory voluminous running results, coupled with voluminous particulars, relating to handicaps and their supposed peculiarities, but, strangely enough, unable to offer an opinion, by way of explanation or otherwise, on any point outside what the weights, as these were assigned, may or may not have done.

I must say in the face of this, I join with the many in thinking that the best interests of our great national pastime demand a far wider and broader field of inquiry, into the merits of the thoroughbred, than is furnished for delectation by the work of the handicapper.

In the chapters on "Horses" I have referred to the characteristics and peculiarities of horses, coupled with their running capabilities on the level, and on gradients, as also on ground subject to climatic changes.

Though my statements are founded on actual experience and very attentive observation, it will be understood I do not arrogate to myself the acquisi-

tion of other than general information touching the subjects referred to.

I say this, however, that it opens up matter in the interests of racing of very serious consequence, while it should afford facilities for scientific inquiry, the advantages of which should not be overlooked by race-horse owners or, indeed, any one associated with the thoroughbred or with racing.

If what I have said is accurate and well founded, as I believe it to be, then I think it goes a long way to show how little the allotment of weight in handicaps has had to do in the long run with races of that description.

It should be well known that a handicap run over different courses will have a different winner and different placed horses on each occasion, and this, of itself, should have caused something more effective than weights fixed by estimate to have been long since substituted for it.

The principle of apportioning weight that horses shall carry in races should be governed in certain cases by "scale," as weight-for-age races are so governed. There is this, however, to be said:—Weight-for-age races are races irrespective of merit, while races arranged on the basis of "weight-for-merit," are races irrespective of age.

The basis of weight should be the actual and not the assumed basis of merit. For instance, it is obviously unjust that horses of four years and upward having no records, in the sense that their merits may have been concealed, should be permitted to race with three-year-olds on the same terms. In such cases weight governed by *rule* would alone be a corrective.

I cannot but think the scale of weight-for-age, devised by that gallant sportsman, Admiral Rous, and since 1873 "modified to satisfy practical suggestions," yet needs careful revision in respect of two-year-olds racing with older horses in the spring and summer months. There is little room for doubt the terms as set are by far too much in favor of the older horses.

The nursery handicaps, commencing in September, that we have been familiar with, can only be said in point of merit to have been of an exceedingly doubtful kind. It is true an occasional close finish may be seen. But so far as "close finishes" are concerned, these prove little beyond the fact that horses running on the most unequal terms now and again so run, and will continue to do so, and be as devoid of merit as ever, as long as jockeys ride "waiting" races.

Nursery handicaps, however, compiled with all

the care that is possible, can in the main be only guesswork, and nothing further need be said concerning them.

Any disposition of weight in the absence of known merit must necessarily be guesswork, and for my part I cannot but regard a horse let into a race under such conditions as sufficient, in the spirit of fair play, to render it void on that ground.

I see no reason why weight, assigned by "merit," should not be governed by "scale," dividing horses of three years and upward into classes. The principle should be to make each horse bear his right burden in accordance with age, coupled with the class his merits shall have determined.

Horses of unknown merit when running in races other than weight-for-age races should be expressly governed by "rule," as I have said.

In arranging the weights for two-year-olds there should necessarily be different treatment, though the principle of "merit" must needs be kept in view. To my mind there are two points of essential importance in this. Not only should two-year-old running be governed by merit, but it should also be made to become a basis for three-year-old racing in the following season.

One great advantage of the principle of adjusting the weights for horses on the lines to which I have

only cursorily referred is that it would be gradual in operation, and may easily be made to work, as it were, *pari passu* with methods of racing very greatly in detail, which it is sincerely to be hoped, in the interest of racing, we shall see ere long fast drifting on the side of improvement.

CHAPTER X.

COURSES.

The race-courses we have in England are generally upheld, and are believed to be the best in the world. The reason for this is, that mostly they are laid out on the finest old turf, are well drained, and do not throw up an abnormal crop of herbage. The majority of them are smooth from constant chain harrowing and rolling, and reflect great credit to those intrusted with the duties of management. When all is done, however, to get the various courses into a state of the greatest possible perfection for racing purposes, there are no two strictly alike anywhere, or the running of horses upon them tells a very untruthful tale.

Those who are well acquainted with the several courses referred to in all parts of the Kingdom are aware that in formation all more of less differ, but

it is to be doubted if any amongst these good people, even the clerks of courses included, could give a correct definition practically of any one of them, of what it consisted.

In the absence of precise information, it is highly difficult to understand the ins and outs and the general peculiarities of a race-course, and yet it is so important a matter that nobody who goes racing should be in ignorance of it. To find it out for yourself is an event both troublesome and not a little perplexing. You may walk over the ground, you may view it from a spot here and a spot there, you may look at it from the stand and the stand enclosure, you may ask whom you will for information, but it all ends at this: the actual levels, the formation of the ground itself, the lengths of the gradients, are so much Greek to you, that so far as getting advised upon these necessary details, you must needs give it up, and retire very little wiser than when you came.

If this were an isolated case some provision might be made for it, but it happens to be the state of things a person must be prepared to encounter, let him select any race-meeting he may choose to visit anywhere in the kingdom. For some reason or other a survey giving details of courses appears never to be made, or if this should be made, it certainly is

not made known by ordinary publication. The curious thing about it, however, is that upon these courses racing goes on year by year, and although now and again some marvellously contradictory running is seen, people never appear to inquire the extent to which the conformation of the ground may have contributed to it.

Why people should ostensibly know so much about horses, and know little, or it may be nothing, about the character of the ground upon which they gallop in a race, is most surprising; yet, for all that, I should think the time cannot be so far distant now when this branch of the ethics of racing will be thought to merit a little of the attention it certainly deserves.

It was only the other day I met a well-known clerk of the course—a man recognized everywhere as a thoroughly practical and painstaking official—of whom I inquired whether a survey had been made of any course under his management, and it certainly did not surprise me when he said it had not. The measurements in point of distance had been arrived at, he said, "pretty accurately, although the chain had not been run over them." "Our races," he went on to say, "are always stated to be 'about' the distance mentioned in the conditions, and that is near enough for me, and I am satisfied with it."

"Don't you think," I said, "that a survey should be made, and the details of measurements set out, showing the gradients for public guidance?"

"No," he said; "we are not required to do it, and I should not incur that trouble and expense unless a rule were passed making it compulsory. I do not, however, see that it is wanted, for people who run horses should get to know the ups and downs for themselves."

"But," said I, "about the outsiders?"

"Oh, we don't need to trouble about them, they are able to look after themselves."

This, I think, pretty clearly shows there is something to be done, at least by clerks of courses, to put their patrons into possession of information everybody is entitled to have. To say that it is not wanted is absurd, for it partakes of that which is of the A B C order in racing, besides which, unless one knows what he is pleased to call the "ups and downs," what chance is there of comparing a horse's running elsewhere with what he is likely to do when he comes to run on this particular ground?

There is really a serious question involved in this matter of getting to know the various gradients of courses. It is all very well for clerks of courses to pooh-pooh it, and desire to take refuge in the fact that so far the Jockey Club have not seen fit to make it compulsory. They should remember, how-

ever, the public are not so blind, and so unintelligent, as not to know that persons having the management of race meetings are naturally desirous of providing spectacle, as obviously nothing pays like spectacular effect. In a word, nobody expects them to be oblivious to the gleams of sunshine on their prosperity and progress created by the presence of moneyed people, and so to speak the gathering of the clans that money begets, for that would not be human nature.

But, labor as much as they will in the cause of outward show, even clerks of courses cannot afford to allow the working of the great racing machine to be left as a duty for humbler mortals to fulfil. It is clearly their duty to make known, by giving published details, of what their courses consist. Let them set out fully and distinctly everything the public have a right to know about the "ups and downs." Every gradient in every course should be shown, and the actual measurements so set out that no difficulty would be experienced in ascertaining the level, *and the distances at the level*, between starting and winning posts.

Surface measurements, except on a strictly level course, not being actual running distances, every stated distance for which a race is to be run, it is imperative, should be given as measured at the level. I have said "imperative," because not only

are handicaps framed on the basis of a level course, but amongst the hidden secrets of racing, in a large measure, there lies and underlies, it should always be remembered, the question of "gradient."

Clerks of courses will be well advised never to roll down long grass on their courses, as when it happens that horses are made to race against the edges of the grass rolled from the opposite direction, their chances of success are reduced to almost nil. In cases where long grass must of necessity be rolled late in the season, as on Newmarket Heath, it must only be done so that the grass shall lie in the direction the horses gallop, or the racing will be altogether incorrect, if not positively unfair.

I have seen jockeys over and over again disregard this, with the result, by the use of the watch, there has been a difference in a horse's running, over the same ground, amounting to as much as three or four lengths, and I have known it, even in a well-contested race, to amount to something like twenty lengths, the speed being in the latter case extremely bad.

It must not be taken that rolled grass is alone to be met with on Newmarket Heath. I have seen it at plenty of other places, but at none where the work was so well done, or with anything approaching the care, to ensure racing shall not be interfered

with by it. The courses on Newmarket Heath are in every respect most admirably cared for, and I do not think it would be possible to have them, under all conditions, in better trim, I may say, at every meeting held on the classic Heath throughout the racing season.

CHAPTER XI.

TIME.

One of the most important studies connected with racing is that commonly called the "time test," but there are few, I am afraid, who know anything about it. Some are to be found, it is true, who have tried it, but their knowledge, so far as I have seen, is only superficial, and they are generally hopelessly at sea on the subject. It is, in all its aspects, a difficult study, and I do not pretend to have mastered it wholly in all its somewhat complex details. I can say this, however, that I have given myself the chance of doing so, for I have studied it for many years, and possess the records of races I have timed on almost every course in England, to number in the aggregate something approaching 4,000.

In my time I have seen a good deal of racing and racing methods, not the least interesting of which

has been the use of the watch whenever practicable. That that little instrument is, under certain conditions, a reliable tell-tale, there can be no manner of question, the only wonder to me being that it is not generally used. There is this, however, to be said about it, that to acquire the art of timing races is like acquiring the art of performing on a musical instrument, and cannot be done without practice, patience, and much observation.

When I speak of "observation," it is difficult to say the extent to which, of necessity, it must go. There must be no obstructive wind, nor, on the other hand, blowing too freely with the horses, when running, if great accuracy is required. The state of the ground is all-important. If it should not be firm, the speed will be unreliable; if it is wet, and the foot of the horse sinks in, except as a criterion of what horses can do under such conditions, time has no further value in this instance.

In a wet season the case is very much altered, for then you time under wet conditions, so to speak, and certain horses will be found to be as accurate in mud as other horses are alone accurate when the ground is quite dry. Thus, in timing races it is as necessary to have your list of horses for *wet-ground* racing as it is to have those carefully ticked off that are for *dry-ground* racing, the

latter of which, by the way, being of no good whatever when it is not in that state. Then you must carefully observe what is going on in the course of the race.

Some horses you will see to be "racing," while others are not, and the latter category you will discover to amount to an average of about 65 per cent, or thirteen out of every twenty, concerning the running of which no question of time need be entertained. The "racing horses" are those to be kept in view, and it is marvellous the accuracy with which horses perform under conditions to which I shall presently refer.

When you have parcelled off your "wet-ground" and your "dry-ground" horses, you then have to deal with those taken from these lists having speed either for the level only or the incline only; and now and again you will come across an animal having no speed whatever on either of these kind of courses, no matter what the state of the ground might be, but with terrific speed downhill, stopping to nothing directly the end of it is reached, though it lands him apparently on the level.

The only conclusion to be drawn from the somewhat wonderful information derived from a watch, when correctly used, is that in the physical construction of horses, when at the gallop, there

must be an angle at which the ground is struck by the feet, at present unknown to us. It is quite certain all horses do not strike the ground in any degree to be relative, or speed would certainly be more uniform. Speed, however, differs to the extent that on some gradients horses are fast, while their relative speed on others is, for some unknown reason, comparatively slow. Of course it will be understood I refer to sound horses, those that can be depended upon to give their natural rate of speed, whatever it may be, on all gradients, as also on the level.

As I have said before, horses are predisposed to repeat their performance on the same ground with little variation time after time, and, upsetting as it will be to handicap notions, the weight they may have on their backs is not, comparatively speaking, of very material consequence. Persons have seen dead-beats, when run off, again repeated, and close shaves of short heads, and heads and necks, in matches times out of number. Of these I have seen many.

But more striking still is the fact that horses will come after a longish interval of months, or it may be a year or more, and over the same ground there will scarcely be a pin to choose between the performances. A direct illustration of this oc-

curred on the Manchester course several years ago, which, I am bound to say, at the time greatly impressed me. This was in the years 1891 and 1893, in the Salford Borough Handicap, distance one mile, when both these races were won by that exceedingly useful horse, Workington, the property of that good all-round and popular sportsman, the Right Hon. James Lowther, M. P.

Manchester—or perhaps I should say New Barns—Race-course is to all appearances perfectly flat. I have seen it from the stand and enclosures many times, but I have never been over it. I had the temerity on one occasion to ask permission of the executive to do so, and in my weakness, as a last resource in my endeavor to accomplish that desired end, I stated, in the interest of my readers, the purpose I had, when my request was refused—and not in very polite terms either, I thought.

However, I have seen some good horses run there, and when the ground is dry some good racing, but it very seldom is dry. It was dry, however, when Workington beat good fields on both occasions; but the most remarkable thing was that, notwithstanding the long interval, and he was then an aged horse, he ran the course in 1893 in precisely the same time he had done so two years previously. The time was 1 minute 42 4-5 seconds, or, for purposes of comparison, 2 2-5 seconds slower

than Georgie did the same distance in the Prince Edward Handicap last September. In point of distance, this would be eight lengths as nearly as possible.

Of course, upon this there is the question of weights, to which race-goers in general attach so very much importance. Workington carried on the first occasion 7 st. 9 lb., and on the second 7 st. 12 lb., being a difference of 3 lb. only. Georgie carried 7 st. 4 lb., or, say, 7 lb. in favor of the latter mare. That this made any difference, or would have made any difference, supposing Georgie had carried 7 st. 12 lb., I cannot suggest as likely for a moment.

It is an incontestable fact, strange as it may seem, and contrary as it may be to the prevailing idea, that, with few exceptions, all horses run their fastest races, under the watch, when they carry the heaviest weight. A notable instance of it was in the case of Amphion, a splendid miler and a first-class horse into the bargain, when in training some few years ago. The fastest race he ran during his career was when he had 10 st. 3 lb. on his back.

Best Man was another horse that ran under the same conditions. Why he should have been set down as of the Melton tribe I never could make out, for every characteristic the horse possessed, from his head to his heels, was that of Ormonde. Again,

to see him in full swing, the way he carried his head and used those powerful propellers of his was undoubtedly Ormonde.

I know in thus writing I somewhat fly in the face of "authoritative opinion," but in cases of doubted parentage, if it is to be held one must accept the offspring as due to the last service, then the retention of the name of the sire first used is little less than a farce. In these cases, however, of doubt, and where there is a choice of sires, I prefer to follow the evidence of one's eyes, and to be guided in one's judgment by characteristics of sire as unmistakable as they appeared in Best Man as I saw him during his racing career.

In the matter of speed, on mile courses and on gradients the same in character, Best Man followed Ormonde very closely. On the level, however, the former horse was by no means gifted with high speed, nor, as a matter of fact, was Ormonde either. Both were race horses of bull-dog courage and resolution, and could always be depended upon to fight their races out to the bitter end. The peculiarity of Best Man's running, as he increased in years, was that he ran nearly all courses at the same rate of speed, and when he won the Old Cambridgeshire up the Criterion Hill, he went just as fast as he was able to go on the flat.

I have often wondered, assuming Best Man and Florizel II.—a sterling good horse on a level course, and gifted, too, with a high rate of speed—could have been matched on perfectly even terms, what course in the country could have been found that would have been fair to both horses, in the sense that each would have displayed his best qualities. No two horses could have been more dissimilar in every racing particular, yet on their own ground both brilliant performers.

A good many people I am sure would say the Rowley Mile, while others would jump to the conclusion that Across the Flat would satisfy all requirements. Here are two courses, perhaps at the respective distances not to be surpassed by any in this country, or in any other if it comes to that, and yet neither Best Man nor Florizel II. showed anything like high-class racing merit on them, and in the matter of speed, it never approached what both horses showed over and over again elsewhere where better suited.

I have not forgotten Best Man ran second to Marco in the Cambridgeshire over this very ground, but at its best it was only a poorish performance, and in point of speed did not come up to what he did two days later over a far more trying course, namely, the Old Cambridgeshire, to which I have re-

ferred, by, in point of distance, nearly a length and a half.

I have said horses do not strike the ground in any degree to be relative, and I am hoping as time goes on opportunity will be given for fuller investigation. Best Man, it is true, ran all courses pretty much at the same rate of speed, a circumstance or a peculiarity I have never found to have existed in any other horse.

The general experience I have had of horses running is that, on a particular character of ground, they have what is called a "set speed." I have, however, always found that with a change in the conformation of the ground there is always, or very nearly always, a change in the rate of speed, though the variation in the ground itself is scarcely perceptible.

CHAPTER XII.

TIME (*continued.*)

I cannot, in the present work, enter upon the subject of defining distance by time, when it comes to a question of showing the relative running of horses which have finished within measurable distance behind the actual winner. For instance, supposing a horse to have run, say, second, third, fourth, or even fifth, in a well contested race, it must not be imagined that the time cannot be as accurately taken as though he finished first. On the contrary, there is no difficulty in this, and I have found the time thus taken to be in every respect as correct as though it referred to the winner only. In stating, therefore, that Best Man's performance in the Old Cambridgeshire, which he won, was faster by a length and a half than when he ran second, behind Marco, on the New Cam-

bridgeshire course, it is in accordance with the time taken as I have just mentioned.

In view of this, and as a matter that may be of interest to my readers, I deal with the running of Georgic at Manchester, in the Cambridgeshire, and also in the Old Cambridgeshire last autumn, for the purpose of showing of what it consisted relatively, and to enable a comparison to be made with the running of Best Man in the two latter events to which I have referred.

In the Prince Edward Handicap at Manchester, Georgic carried 7 st. 4 lb., and covered the distance, 1 mile, in 1 minute 40 2-5 seconds, or the same time as Clwyd, carrying 7 st. 12 lb., in 1895.

In the Cambridgeshire she carried 7 st. 8 lb., distance 1 mile 240 yards, in 1 minute and 55 2-5 seconds. In the Old Cambridgeshire, in which she ran second, she carried 7 st. 12 lb., and covered the distance in 2 minutes 2 1-5 seconds—that is to say, 2 1-5 seconds behind the winner. Best Man ran second for the Cambridgeshire in 1 minute 58 3-5 seconds, and won the Old Cambridgeshire in 1 minute 58 seconds.

By this it will be seen that, on the New Cambridgeshire course, Georgic beat Best Man's time by 4 seconds, while on the Old course things were reversed to the etxent that Best Man beat Georgic's

time by 4 seconds. Now, if the 4 seconds are computed to represent ten lengths in each case, there is yet the question of the 4 lb. difference in weight in favor of Best Man's time in the Old Cambridgeshire, and upon this hypothesis, assuming these two animals were about to be handicapped for a third race to be brought off at precisely the same distance on a level course, I ask what possible weights could be assigned to give each a fair chance? At what conceivable weights, on the principle of handicapping according to recognized rules, could Best Man be made to beat Georgie on a level course, and, *vice versa*, Georgie to beat Best Man on a course having a steep incline?

Problematical as this may appear, it is worthy, in the interest of racing, of the highest consideration. Of course, it is understood I have introduced the running of Best Man (the horse being a reliable public performer) in order to show of what relative form consists, on ground so well known as are the two Cambridgeshire courses to every race-goer.

The puzzle, if there is a puzzle in it, is the running of Georgie in the Old Cambridgeshire. Relatively gauged, as I have shown, there was a difference of 8 seconds between her form here and that which took place in the Cambridgeshire two days previously. Much less than 8 seconds would have

won the race, and easily, too. Without going minutely into distances, the speed of the mare is so great, that on the other course it would have been, if one may be permitted to imagine such a thing, like Best Man, viewing her passing the winning post from the Bushes Hill, not being able to get nearer to her than that. In any case, it proves Georgie to be an animal of great merit on a flat course, but not to be of much account where there is a stiff gradient.

If it were necessary, instances such as I have mentioned of horses running their fastest races with the heaviest weight up could be given to a very large extent; but there is perhaps just this to be said—horses with welter-weights on their backs are differently ridden, and opportunities less frequently thrown away of getting to the winning post as soon as possible when fairly on their way. When this is done, there is of course better speed made, though, generally speaking, the method of riding in this country is not in furtherance of that desirable end.

Take, as an example, the performance of Rodomont, a horse still in training, but one nobody would be willing to regard at any time during his career as a high-class race horse. In his best days he won, as the book tells, several good races, as

many horses before him have done, without gaining more than passing notice, and certainly without the least semblance, in point of merit, of having acquired fame. This is just Rodomont's fate; yet if people are told that he established a name for himself, in having run, perhaps, the fastest race on record over the Cambridgeshire Course, few will be disposed to look upon it as otherwise than incredible.

The race in question was the Newmarket Handicap, run at the Second Spring Meeting, in May, 1895. Rodomont carried 8 st. 6 lb., and covered the distance, 1 mile 240 yards, in 1 minute 55 seconds, or 2-5 of a second faster than Georgic ran the Cambridgeshire, over the same ground, last season. The 2-5 of the second may fairly be put at 3-4 of a length.

There was a great deal to be learned by the running of this horse, and also by the result of the race. Nothing need be said of the riding, for the horse set the pace himself, and came right through, overpowering the jockey from start to finish. I did not see any second horse in it, and my surprise was great when one was given as three lengths away from the winner. From thence on I could but keep in view the career of an animal that had told as plainly as words could express of what its capabilities consisted, both in point of distance

gradient. He ran several times during the remainder of the season, and afterwards won on two occasions; but the speed was poor, and it was clear the horse was out of his distance, was badly placed in point of gradient, and altogether unsuited to the task he was set to perform.

The point, however, to be observed in Rodomont's case is that which undoubtedly would be applicable in the case of a large number of horses. If it had been possible to have run him half a dozen times over the same ground, following the performance in the Newmarket Handicap, he would not only have repeated his time, probably, on each occasion, but it would have been difficult to have found an animal to beat him at racing weights.

To enumerate the horses that have repeated their time over the same ground within my experience, regardless of the difference in weights, were I to enter upon the task, would fill a volume. A notable instance, in point of repeating the time, was La Fleche, in the Derby and the Oaks, the two worst races, perhaps, the filly ran as a three-year-old. The time in both these races was exactly the same, though she only ran second in the former race. The ground was then very hard, and the filly looked dull and out of sorts.

La Fleche's finest performance, certainly that

year, if not during her career, was in the Cambridgeshire, following her St. Leger triumph, when, with 8 st. 10 lb. on her three-year-old back, she won with the greatest ease, in the marvellous time of 2 minutes 1 2-5 seconds. The race was run in the deepest ground known at Newmarket in the month of October for a generation, and I remember never to have seen anything like it, certainly at Newmarket. The manner La Fleche squandered her field I shall never forget, simply leaving her twenty nine opponents sprawling in the mud.

CHAPTER XIII.

TIME (*continued.*)

As there are no two courses exactly alike anywhere in this country, I do not suggest that the relative running of horses upon them can be demonstrated with positive accuracy. It happens, however, that the running on the ground of the Rowley Mile at Newmarket and at Kempton show results somewhat similar.

A performance on both these well known and popular battle grounds should be mentioned in St. Frusquin, a most reliable runner, and perhaps as game a horse as was ever saddled. I had St. Frusquin under the watch a good many times, with satisfactory results, bar his race at Kempton, when he was placed second to Teufel. How that came about I am not prepared to say. I can only state the facts, and at the same time add that I have looked upon that result as the most disastrous of

any that has occurred during my acquaintance with the turf.

St. Frusquin had been over the same ground before, and I had his measure in a way that I could not be deceived by the running or mistaken in point of correctness of observation. I remember the race quite well. The state of the elements and the ground were all that could be desired. In the matter of weight, although the colt had won three races right off the reel, of the value collectively of 6,000 pounds, he was only placed here at a disadvantage of 5 lb., against such animals as Barn Dance and Balm of Gilead, while Teufel was in receipt of 12 lb.

The start was a good one. St. Frusquin, jumping into his stride, was well away in the front rank. All through the race, however, the speed was wretchedly slow, and there was nothing in point of interest to redeem the event from that so often seen described in print as a "common affair." With this description I take the opportunity of saying I do not agree, for to see horses—well-trained horses—galloping, when racing or not racing, is at all times a delightful spectacle, and I know in this respect I have a large majority of my countrymen—ay, and countrywomen too—on my side.

However, the race in question took a period of 1 minute and 19 seconds, on a perfectly flat course;

and therefore, in only getting second, half a length behind Teufel, St. Frusquin ran the very worst race of his life as a race horse. The extraordinary part of the business was that when Teufel passed the winning-post a winner, St. Frusquin should have been, on his merits, just twelve and a half lengths in front, then to have eased up, and practically on his way to weigh in.

My readers will remember that on that same day in the following week St. Frusquin won the Middle Park Plate at Newmarket, and what he should have done, and more than done at Kempton, he accomplished at the former place, thus proving to demonstration there was no justification from any point of view for what had happened at Kempton, as I have said.

To have been deprived of a stake worth £4,000 was bad enough in all conscience for an owner under the circumstances, but those having more reason to complain, perhaps, were people associated with the great army of racing investors, whose admiration of a reputed good one never stops short of the employment of pen and pencil, in the cause which brings bookmakers and backers into what is called "healthful contest." That Teufel should have become the hope of the future, from a speculative point of view, with a multitude of people, in a sense, was not to be wondered at, for

although the event to which I refer occurred in 1895, yet I do not think, down to the present, our friends the sporting writers have ever failed to extol the fame of Teufel consequent upon the horse's supposed great achievement in lowering the colors of St. Frusquin.

What this will have cost the racing public through these series of years, down to last autumn, when Teufel was deemed by many as "*the good thing*" for the Cambridgeshire, and backed with the pertinacity racing enthusiasts are so much given to, goodness only knows. For my part, I have dreaded to see the name of Teufel in events again and again, when speed above all was the desideratum, knowing full well that, so long as the horse remained in training, the racing public would continue to regard him as a sort of idol, and be guided by its superstition. Had they reflected, however, that as a two-year-old in the month of October he was only able to cover six furlongs in 1 minute 19 seconds on a flat course, their enthusiasm should have cooled down, when it made him out to be only a bad horse.

Why sporting writers should, as a body, take no heed of the time in which a race is run is very singular. It matters not what may be the value of the stake or the gigantic interests involved; they either hold aloof altogether, or perhaps one amongst

their number, in a half-hearted sort of way, gives a casual notice of the time in which a certain race is run.

To my thinking this is very much to be regretted, but I imagine it will not be long now before the public will ask, if they do not insist, that all races shall be officially timed, and the results duly published in "The Racing Calendar." It will be understood that, in pointing this omission out, I do not make any complaint against sporting writers, to whom the public in general, and race-goers in particular, owe so much.

The labors these gentlemen perform in the course of their duties, it is well known, are prodigious, while the amount of energy and ability they bring into the task cannot be too widely recognized as deserving unanimous approbation.

By the aid of the watch, how many horses can be roughed out of a race as having no place in one's estimation for a particular event! Again, how many horses have I not seen, and heard, backed for large sums in all parts of the ring that, in the then state of the ground and on the particular course on which the race was about to be run, had no chance whatever, as the result proved! Then, again, how many horses on these occasions get first past the

post that otherwise would not be in the first half dozen, even if they got so near!

As every racing man knows, the secret of racing depends to a large extent on his knowledge and judgment of relative form. Whatever opinion he may entertain of a horse's particular merit, it can be of little use to him if, having brought into the reckoning the fact that there are no two courses exactly alike, he is unable to adapt it to the circumstances that arise, wherever it may be.

As, with very few exceptions, horses differ in speed on every course they run, when not over the same ground, so the result in all races must necessarily be attended with uncertainty. The idea of successful prognostication, except now and again by an off chance, really makes it a matter for derision by those taking the trouble to work out the subject for themselves. This, of course, refers more especially to the "old time" methods of racing, or such as we have been only too long familiar with.

Since, however, the American system of "track riding" has been introduced on our grass courses, racing generally has not only improved by the races being run at a higher rate of speed, but by the adoption of those aids to scientific attainment I have made it the business of this work to bring to the notice of my readers, we may hope in the near

future to witness our cherished national sport reach a higher standard of excellence than in all branches we have enjoyed hitherto.

The system of "track riding" to which I have referred was, no doubt, designed for courses of a very different character to those we have in this country. Its special purpose was to accomplish a high rate of speed on a level course, and I think it is very much open to question if the system itself was ever intended for any other than a level course.

Originally it must have been a matter for very serious consideration whether the "track riding" system was adaptable to grass courses as we have them. However, events have shown, and will continue to show, that it is not only adaptable to every kind of course we have, but that it really supplies a much needed improvement upon our own system of race-riding.

CHAPTER XIV.

NAMING HORSES.

It is curious at the present day horses should be running in races, competing for stakes, made up of what is called "public money," without a name or anything to distinguish them one from another beyond a simple notification of their pedigrees. Why horses should thus be permitted to run in races under the rules of racing, and allowed to compete for public stakes, I could never make out, certainly on any grounds that were intelligible. The only justification of it put forward with any show of reason I have ever heard was that "persons were entitled to do as they liked with their own."

To this view of the rights of individuals I should not be disposed to offer the least objection. Still, in the case of races in which public money is given or subscribed, either by way of plate, or in specie, or of both, and in which there is by common consent

certain public interests involved, no animal should be eligible to run, nor should the entry of any animal be permitted to be officially accepted, not having a name, in accordance with the rules of racing. If this salutary obligation were insisted upon, and the rule extended to provide for it, it would do much to further the interests of racing.

We have certainly moved on since the time when the late Lord Glasgow, with all his comicalities and whimsicalities in the matter of naming—or, rather, not naming—his horses, was amongst us, justly honored as one of the pillars of the turf. Although only a youngster in those days, I well remember what a crop there was of "Melbournes" and "Birds on the Wing," and how he had sires and dams and granddams and great-granddams of sires and dams, all pedigreed, to define as far as it was possible generations upon generations of unnamed horses in most delightful confusion.

Behind a dash of bluntness, and it may have been perhaps of austerity, in his ordinary demeanor, there was little doubt there lurked in Lord Glasgow's composition a rare fund of racy humor. By not naming his horses, and thus in a way bringing the "jargon of the ring," as he amusingly called it, into positive collapse, there is little doubt he intended a huge joke. For once, however, he named a colt (then no beauty to look at) after his friend and boon compan-

ion General Peel, which partook of the same racy turn, though it merged historically, by the happening of events, into another and perhaps more pleasing vein. Happily, Lord Glasgow's pet idea in the matter of nomenclature did not assume such proportions as to become a prevailing fashion; thus to a large extent we were spared the derision of our neighbors in not only being a "nation of shopkeepers," but that our intelligence did not enable us to provide names for our race-horses.

There is nothing more easy than to find a pleasing, and at the same time a suitable name for a horse intended to be known to the public in the character of a race-horse. In making a selection, it should not be overlooked that, apart from the matter of taste, there is something to be said on the question of culture, and it will not be everybody who will care to pose before a critical audience like the British public as lacking in either of these. To be a suitable name it should never go beyond, except in very rare instances, *ten letters in length*, whether the name itself is simple or compound—that is, one word or more.

It would do much for the best interests of racing if a higher standard were inculcated in the names given to horses, and if in some way or other people could be induced to get away from the practice of

alone looking for a name as suggested by the existing names of the sire and the dam. I believe this method, providing as it does a sort of hard-and-fast rule by which people are guided in the concoction of names, has led to the numberless feeble results that come under one's eye day by day. In naming a colt, or it may be a filly, on these lines, people do not like to be outdone, or to have to take a sort of back-seat to their neighbors, in the matter of smartness and piquancy, though it may create any number of breaches in both appropriateness and finish.

It might give offence and perhaps wound the susceptibilities of some of my most intimate friends were I to particularize even some from the many vain attempts at erudition, or where erudition had floundered so visibly as to baffle even one's ordinary understanding, so I give it up. But for all that, I trust I may be permitted to say I do not relinquish the desire to create a new era in turf nomenclature, if it be possible, in the cause that uppermost should guide one's actions in such a matter—viz., of the turf itself.

By this I do not mean to infer we in this country have no well-named horses. If such were suggested it would obviously be extremely incorrect. We have not only large numbers, the names of which are appropriate and pleasing in every way, but certain

owners are remarkable for the skill and good taste they exhibit in this respect.

While I believe the well-named horses counterbalance the ill-named ones by a largish majority, still there are plenty of the latter character one would wish to see, if it were possible, so far as the names themselves are concerned, erased from the records, for the simple reason that, being inappropriate and ill-chosen, they offend rather than invoke enthusiasm, and too frequently are as devoid of witticism as they are in one other respect—viz., of polish.

In the paddock and on the course, how our pleasure is marred when we see a beautiful horse with an uncouth and ill-sounding name! And how little there is to excite one's mirth when, floating on the breeze, coming, it may be, from the direction of the ring, one hears a babble of inarticulate sounds, caused by persons vainly striving and struggling to enunciate an unpronounceable and unintelligible names!

Then, in the chapter of accidents, as it were, how few ill-named horses ever contribute by their deeds anything to leave a mark on the pages of turf history, or, indeed, anything behind them to make the fact of their existence a matter of record in the Stud Book! In the face of things, therefore, there is no encouragement to give a race-horse an ill-

chosen name, but, on the contrary, everything to discourage it.

As I have said, there are plenty of names—the supply is almost inexhaustible—which may readily be chosen within the limit of *ten letters* that will do credit to any selection, and at the same time become a pleasing, not to say complimentary, episode of both colonial and international recognition.

I suggest that the names of our race-horses—animals that are prized in some respects, without sense of humiliation, as highly as are the claims of some members of the human species—should be named after places, suitable in point of selection, in the British colonies, in the Indian Empire, and in that part of the Western world graced by the presence of our American kinsmen.

Let those, therefore, in search of a name for their horses honor themselves, as they will honor British enterprise and the friends of Great Britain over the seas, by the simple expedient of casting their eye over the index of any good atlas, when they will see before them, in those countries to which I have referred, thousands of names, providing at once all that need be desired to afford the happiest selection.

CHAPTER XV.

TIPSTERS.

I cannot be expected to say anything in favor of the methods and practices of a class of individuals known to the public as "tipsters." For my own part, if I consulted my own wishes, I should prefer to be silent, leaving it to those having a wider knowledge of the subject than I possess to prescribe a remedy for what undoubtedly is a most intolerable evil.

In dealing with such a question one can only be guided by what, under the circumstances, the best interests of the turf as a recognized national institution demand. As it is the duty of every loyal citizen to uphold and to stimulate, as far as it lies in his power, the health-giving enjoyments of the people, so it is equally his duty to ward off every attempt by which at any time these may be assailed.

That the best interests of the turf are being as-

sailed by the doings of tipsters there is no doubt whatever; and it not only continues, but goes on increasing year by year.

The methods employed by them are so familiar to most of us, that anything in the nature of detailed particulars would seem to be quite unnecessary.

That there are tipsters *and* tipsters, in the sense this phrase is understood, must be admitted. They are all, however, more or less "tarred with the same brush," inasmuch as the basis of operation, the idea of their supposed business occupation, in the direction of being possessed of secret or stable information concerning the chances of success horses may have in races, to be of advantage to others in the way of investments, though never availed of by themselves, is founded in falsehood and misrepresentation.

On the presumption of carrying on a system of business in its character *bona fide* and honest, the tipster, by the aid of advertisements in the newspapers, and by circulars and pamphlets, which are distributed by thousands, and, through the postal medium, are made to find a way to reach the hands of every desired person in schools, in colleges, in shops and factories, and in private homes, there is no limit to the chances of wrong committed. That a wrong is committed we know only too well. The

character of the advertisements, the outrageous representations contained in circulars and pamphlets, and the inducements put forward, with unblushing effrontery, intended to lead honest people into ruinous speculations—all tell us this, without need to go further.

Still, the work of destruction carried on by the tipster class does not end at this. Not only do they profit by the sale of their specious publications, presuming to forecast results in racing, to an enormous extent, but, as is well known, their work is in alliance with confederates, who also profit or make gains totalling up to colossal sums in the course of each succeeding racing season. Of the victims of this treachery the police court records from time to time tell us pratically more than we care to be informed of, while at those places where destitution finds a sort of "half-way house" those wishing to know more have only to inquire within.

Why does the Legislature permit tipsters to pursue their nefarious calling in our midst? Can it be that what is fraud and false pretence in other walks of life is not fraud and false pretence when committed, with the same intent by the tipster class?

We have seen bookmakers, men recognized everywhere for their uprightness of conduct and honesty in their dealings, prosecuted before magistrates for

pursuing a legitimate calling in a legitimate way. The authors, the real authors, of the evil of betting, as the moralists put it, however, are the tipsters, a class of persons against whom the moralists never utter a word of condemnation, and, hat in hand, by their silence invite to go on and prosper.

Why the righteous people who prosecuted Mr. Dunn should righteously withhold prosecution from "Mr. Tipster" has puzzled me very considerably. If they could pride themselves in the former case on being guided by reason, if not by wisdom, surely they will have lapsed into supineness, if not something more to excite one's pity, should they not see wisdom to guide them in the latter case.

In my view, it has always been absurd to endeavor to associate the bookmaker with all the evils resulting from imprudent betting. Betting is not illegal. In principle, as far as I have been able to discover, it in no sense differs from that which has founded the institution of insurance, whether the process be by underwriting, on land or on sea, or by policies guarding our lives while we live, or our property from consumption by burglars or fire. Besides, our chances of accident, in the events of our lives, are soothed by the reflection that the odds of about 300 to 1 are laid against our being killed outright; while damage to person, in language we are

only too well made familiar with, "stands in for a shop."

It has been said if there were no bookmakers there would be no backers, which, to my thinking, is "taking hold of the wrong end of the stick," the more correct way of putting it being that if there were no backers there would be no bookmakers; while, practically, if there were no tipsters there would be no backers.

But then, it must not be overlooked that no evil arises from the acts of *legitimate* backers, a class of persons who have a perfect right, in the exercise of their judgment, to do as they like with their own. All the evil and wrongdoing comes from the acts of *illegitimate backers*, a class of persons needing to be protected against themselves. These are the victims of the tipster.

In their ignorance of racing and of racing methods, and the numerous interests connected with the sport, they are readily beguiled by the fulsome extravagances of the tipster's asseverations, such as their "wonderful powers of discernment," their "knowledge of stable policy and stable secrets," their "intimacy on all hands with owners," the "friends and boon companions of owners and trainers and jockeys," and of every trainer and jockey whose name figures in turf records or in the lists

registered at Weatherby's. Then, the "staff of watchers" they employ at every training place in the country, and the "large sums" they pay for exclusive information, derived from sources, according to them, to be "truly astonishing." Their patrons, of course, are among the "highest in the land;" and when asked for their names, those most honored on the turf and society are readily given, with an assurance that baffles belief.

It is no use to warn the "illegitimate backer" of his danger; if it be possible, the danger should be removed, rather, from him. There is no justification for persons, however weak and foolish they may be, being permitted to be led into evil by deception and trickery. If persons must needs bet, let them do so by their own initiation. The law should rigorously intervene to stop the promulgation of *inducement*, whether put forward in a form to be specious or otherwise; that avowedly *intends to urge*, or even to *recommend* persons to risk money by way of backing horses in races. Should the law as it stands not be sufficient or wide enough in its interpretation to make penal a class of offence such as I have pointed out, as daily growing upon us, and encroaching upon the best interests of the turf, then it obviously becomes the duty of the Legislature to extend the law for that purpose by passing a short act of Parliament, and that without delay.