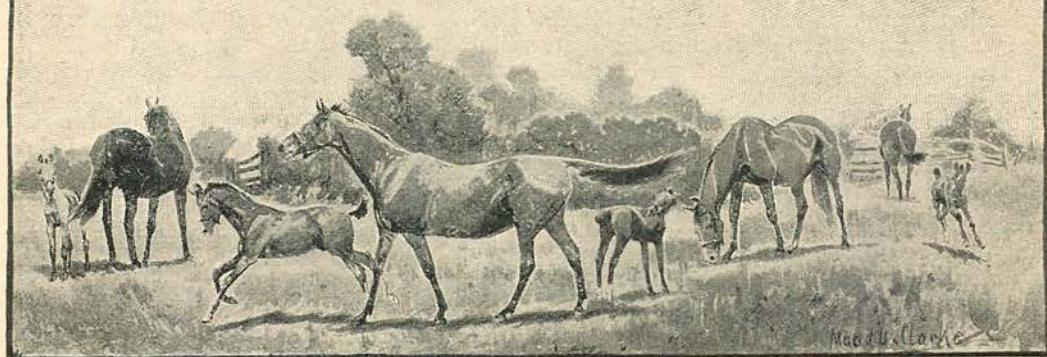


THE PRINCE OF WALES' HORSES.



BY EDWARD H. COOPER.

(Illustrated from photographs by the Author.)

IN certain sporting novels and stories of various degrees of demerit, in the writing of which I have mis-spent the last five years, I have tried to show how wide a difference exists between the

spirit of the gambler and of the sportsman, and how entirely the English Turf is permeated and governed by the latter. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to appreciate this distinction until you have studied, first, the purely sporting spirit as you may see it in the Jockey Club Stands at Newmarket, and, secondly, the pure gambling which you may see at Monte Carlo, or on the racecourses of Paris and the United States, or at that sink of iniquity and blot on the map of civilised Europe, Ostend. I wish some honest and able enemies of the turf would allow me to take them for a tour of the places which I have mentioned. The difference in question is so obvious that they would not be obliged to stay long in each place. In France the training, placing, and riding of racehorses—all the business connected with them, in fact, except the racecourse refreshment department—is managed by English folk, and among the French betting crowds at Longchamps I doubt if 50 per cent. know the name of the horse which they have backed, or anything else about him except his number at the *pari-mutuel* betting machine. At Chantilly the attendance is not increased or decreased by a hundred persons whether the French Derby is being contested by the best lot of three-year-olds ever bred in France, or by horses which, in the expressive Newmarket phrase, "aren't worth



MR. WALKER AND FAMILY.

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a dollar a leg." I forget whether it was a French or an American visitor who, when Kempton Cannon had been kicked off at the start and flung against a post by a vicious animal called Aberdeen, and the rest of the onlookers were murmuring sympathetic remarks about the popular little jockey, turned to me and asked anxiously: "Will the horse come under the starter's orders, or will bets be declared off?" But a very typical American statement is Mr.

the former is the Prince of Wales. There are, I suppose, patrons of the Turf less liable to criticism from its enemies. The late Duke of Westminster, for instance, who let it be known everywhere that he never betted, and whose large income made the value of races a matter of indifference to him, was a very fine type of racing-manhood; but such indifference is something just a little beyond the comprehension of ordinary poverty-stricken humanity. When Ormonde or Flying Fox stride past the



DIAMOND JUBILEE AND HERBERT JONES.

Eugene Leigh's reason for giving up his racing stud: "My horses are too well known to be worth keeping," he told a newspaper correspondent; "they are given top-weight in every handicap, and I can win nothing but the prize money." One may smile at the Italian sportsmen who, after the principal race at a meeting is over, lead up the winner to a rostrum to be crowned with laurel by the Mayor, and at night conduct the horse and his laurel-crowned jockey round the town in a torch-light procession; but their enthusiasm is better than mere business-like gambling.

When I am writing learned arguments on this matter, I have in my mind many types of sportsmen and gamblers; and first among

winning-post at Epsom, magnificent and unapproachable, one feels properly grateful to their owner for so upholding and improving the breed of English horses; but—well, you cannot get very enthusiastically excited about the failures and triumphs of horse-breeding. There is a more human element about the Prince's victories and defeats. I do not propose to be guilty of the impertinence of discussing whether His Royal Highness bets or does not bet, or of putting forward any other suggestion or statement about his private affairs; but, for various reasons, the ordinary spectator believes that when Diamond Jubilee wins the Eclipse Stakes, Diamond Jubilee's owner is quite as pleased to receive £10,000 as he—

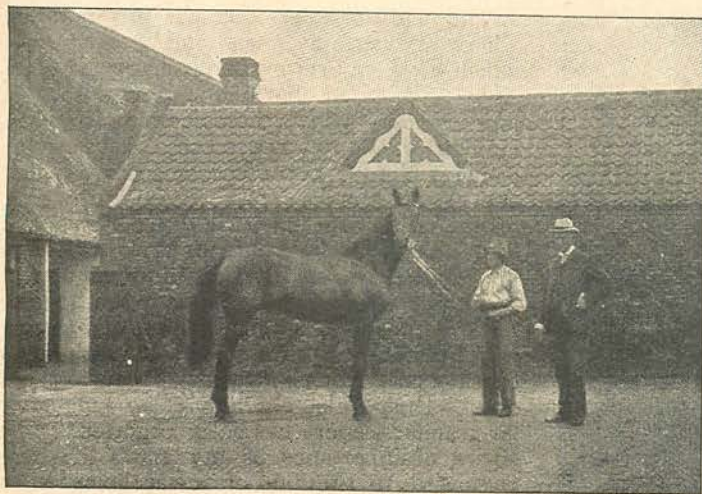
the spectator—would be. This produces some very human sympathy and congratulations; so that the man who would no more have congratulated the Duke of Westminster on winning the Derby than he would chaff the Czar of Russia about the appearance of a new baby, throws up his hat and cheers with warm personal delight when the Prince wins a race. I remember a certain person who was in a box at Epsom last May, having come, rather against his will and while deploring the Prince's bad example in patronising the Turf at all, to see a famous national spectacle. As someone pointed out the crowd which over-ran the course after the Derby, cheering Diamond Jubilee and his owner, the young critic said contemptuously: "Naturally these people cheer him; they're his friends." To which a quiet stranger in an adjoining box answered: "And so are we, all of us;" and fell to cheering too. He stated a fact, and he and his companions have every reason for their approval. Every lover of English sport must welcome such a patron of it. A man of the world, with wide influence and a host of disciples and imitators, with a knowledge and love of a good horse, and a very mortal desire to win a good race and a good stake; a man, moreover, whose racing proceedings are the cynosure of a thousand keenly hostile eyes; is of incalculable benefit to the morality of the Turf, because every act of every horse, man and boy connected with him has got to be far above a breath of suspicion. To-day everyone is contentedly aware that this is the

case with the Prince's racing stud, and if you hinted at the possibility of a "ramp" in connection with one of his horses you would be thought—and called—a fool; but this was not always so. English Turf folk are no sycophants, and they judge, condemn and approve all new-comers into their world, whether princes, financiers or stable-lads, with perfectly outspoken freedom. At the Epsom Spring Meeting of 1895, when Florizel II., then a barely-known atom in a barely-considered racing stud, won a small race, beating a horse called Wherwell belonging to the late Colonel North, I remember quite a small demonstration taking place. Some 80 or 100 people collected in front of Colonel North's box shouting: "You've been robbed, Colonel! They've robbed you to please the Prince of Wales! Wherwell could have won easily!" Colonel North rose up in his box and his face became, if possible, a shade more purple than usual. "Nonsense, gentlemen, nonsense!" he shouted back; "no treason! Three cheers for the Prince of Wales!" and the crowd responded with good-humoured laughter. But there was the same open criticism later on at Manchester, when Florizel won again; the critics suggesting this time that the horse had been let into the handicap at too low a weight; and it was not until Florizel had won the Goodwood Cup and made a gallant effort on three legs to win the Ascot Cup, that the public graciously allowed that the Prince of Wales had at last got a good horse—indeed, several good horses, which were quite capable of holding their own without the intervention of over-loyal jockeys and flattering handicappers.

Luck had now turned for the Prince of



EGERTON HOUSE (THE TREE IN THE ENCLOSURE WAS PLANTED BY THE PRINCE OF WALES).



PERSIMMON.

Wales; to what extent may be most briefly illustrated by the fact that his winnings during the years 1892, 1893, 1894, and 1895 amounted to £7,342, and during the four following years to £51,338. In 1896 Persimmon won the Derby, and if he only beat St. Frusquin, as an American narrator forcibly put it to me, "by putting out his tongue on the post," it must be remembered that he was running against a great racehorse and that all his family develop late and slowly. Like his brother Florizel II., and Diamond Jubilee, Persimmon was beaten as a two-year-old, and he did not run in the Two Thousand Guineas because he had previously been beaten in a private trial by Courtier, a horse to whom three months later, over any distance, Persimmon could have given two stone and lost him. The scene on Epsom Downs when the Prince of Wales won this, his first, Derby, was, indeed, a curious contrast to that afternoon when Florizel II. won his small race here; and yet, marvellous as it was, I doubt if it quite equalled the ovation given to Lord Rosebery when Ladas won the Derby. Speaking of the last eight years, I should say that among the general public Ladas was incomparably the best-known and most popular racehorse of that period. The Prime Minister was at the height of his fame and popularity; newspaper columns were empty of any exciting topics; Ladas had won every race for which he had started, including the Two Thousand, and in the picturesque parlance of Newmarket was a "stone-blind certainty for the Derby," so that the betting portion of the spectators mostly had their shillings and pounds on him; all this lent vigour to the cheers which greeted Lord Rosebery's horse as he came down the Epsom hill with Match-

box and Reminder after him. That his popularity still lives among the public (surviving, I fear, his reputation among the critics!) was shown recently at the wedding of Lord Rosebery's daughter, where a woman in the crowd, pointing to the two horses in the bride's carriage, informed her daughter: "One of those must be Ladas, my dear; he'd be brought up from Epsom on purpose for this." The admirers of Ladas did not, however, quite reach the point of enthusiasm attained by a small band of persons who, after the last Derby, followed Diamond Jubilee back to the weighing-room trying to cut hairs off his tail. The horse's queer temper had, presumably, been improved by winning the race, since the gentlemen in question returned home with their brains—or, let us say, their skulls—intact. The Prince of Wales has, by the way, found some very happy names for his horses. Diamond Jubilee was, of course, inevitable for a colt foaled in 1897, but Persim-



LAODAMIA AND HER FOAL.

mon was a happy thought for a colt by St. Simon out of Perdita II. The dark brown plums known as persimmons are grown better in America than over here, and an American friend of the Prince sends him a



SUSPICIOUS OF A KODAK.

basket of them occasionally. Safety Pin was a neat name for the progeny of Surefoot and Pinbasket, rivalling the late Duke of St. Albans' witty name for his colt by Parmesan out of Noblesse, which he christened High and Mity.

The Prince of Wales having kindly given me permission to visit his racing and breeding studs at Newmarket and Sandringham, I went

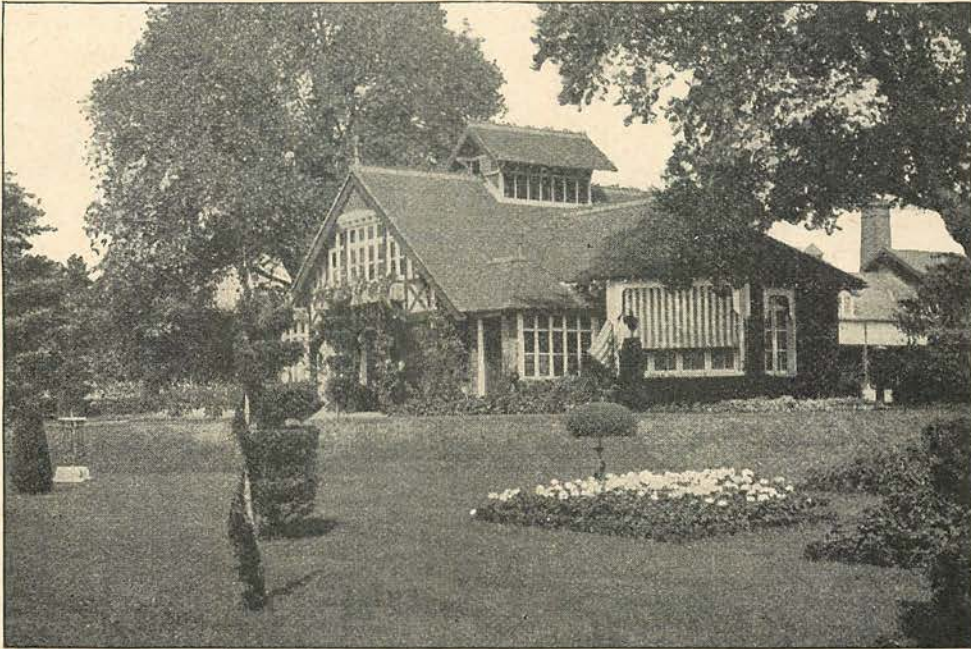
down to Newmarket one recent July morning. There are certain towns and country-sides which have an ever-growing charm for occasional visitors, so that one feels at last as if a journey there were a home-coming to some familiar and long-loved scene. Such a place to me is Newmarket. The long High Street and flower-studded grass of the Bury Hill, where only horses have the right of way; the high plateau of the Limekiln Woods, whence you look down on Ely Cathedral and almost to Lynn; the great wind-swept heath, with its race track and stands and little clump of world-famous "Bushes," near to which for a century past famous races have been lost and won;—their quiet charm lives on long after far grander scenery has been forgotten. The entire unimportance of any man's life here compared to the life of a racehorse is as amusing as it is morally wholesome. The scheme of existence here, which includes getting up at six every morning to go out and see these lordly creatures at exercise on the wide, boundless Bury hills, where the wind comes sweeping from the North Sea; then going back to breakfast at nine o'clock, and then arguing till lunch time as to which of twelve horses can gallop the fastest; after which you go up to the racecourse, where all your arguments are proved more or less (mostly more) to be foolishness;—all this is physically most wholesome. The little town, the capital of the racing world, of course reflects all the popular fashions of the moment. Photographs of the Prince of Wales in every possible dress and position, of Marsh, Herbert Jones, and Diamond Jubilee, now fill the shop windows; while stories and criticism



"WHERE ONLY HORSES HAVE THE RIGHT OF WAY."

of starting-gates, long-distance handicaps, and American training and jockeyship echo round the hotels. As little Johnny Reiff comes tearing down the street on his pony a post-boy calls out: "Hi, Johnny! Is it a clock-trial?" and then tells me: "That's Johnny Reiff, that is. He's a little 'un to be such a swell, ain't he? These 'mericans . . . !" And as I pass a little maid making a hoop with her arms for a kitten to jump through, I hear another passer-by ask her: "Trying the

his own, and as I come on to this at seven o'clock one morning, Mr. Marsh, junior, rides up on Dieudonné and explains to me—under difficulties, for Dieudonné objects to conversation—that the horses have finished their day's work and are going into the paddock for a last walk round. To the paddock I accordingly repair, and after an inspection of two or three of the Prince's horses; of Lucknow, a Newmarket "certainty" for the Goodwood Stewards' Cup; of Lauzun, another

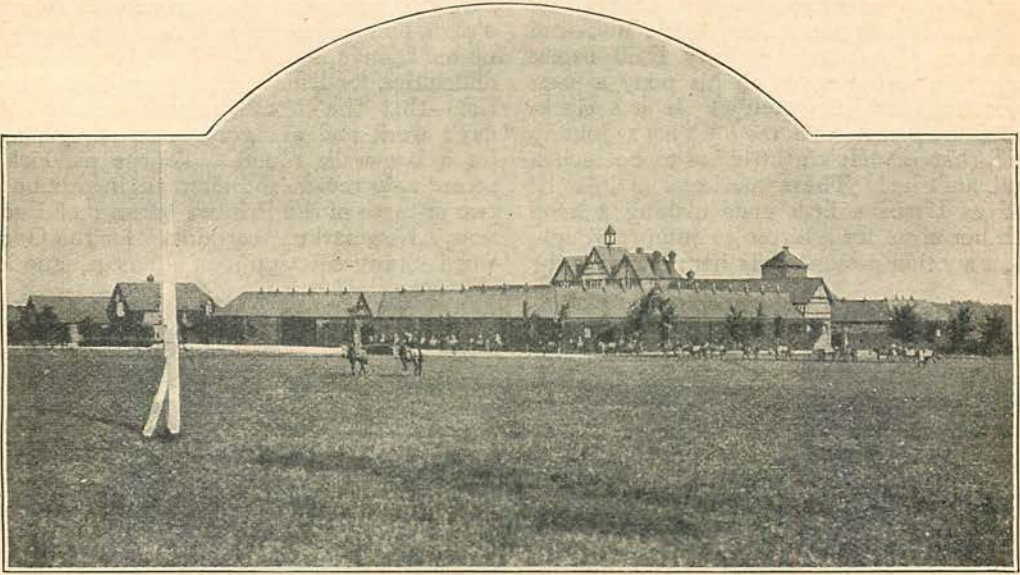


THE PRINCESS OF WALES' DAIRY.

starting-gate, eh, Betty?" A man in the Rutland Arms sums up the Anglo-American jockeyship question rather neatly, to my mind, when he says of Mornington Cannon: "Well, there may be better jockeys, but I lay my life no man ever looked such a good one."

Egerton House, where Mr. Richard Marsh trains horses for the Prince of Wales, Lord Wolverton, Mr. Broderick Cloete, and others, is some three miles from Newmarket and is the smartest looking house and training-stable in the district. The stables, built to accommodate about eighty horses, stand round two courtyards; just outside them, in the Egerton House private grounds, is a large square paddock, round which the long strings of horses take their walking exercise, while beyond this lies the public Bunbury Mile ground, open for training gallops. Mr. Marsh has also a private training ground of

Goodwood "tip"; and of Lord Quex, a good-looking, two-year-old son of Sir Hugo (the Derby winner of 1892, who started with 40 to 1 laid against him), I come up to the hero of the year. Fresh from his victory in the Eclipse Stakes, and looking wonderfully alive in spite of the heat and his five severe races, Diamond Jubilee paces slowly by with Herbert Jones on his back and Frontignan leading the way; he has no race in prospect before the St. Leger, and may take a little well-earned rest. This youngest and last son of St. Simon and Perdita II. does not strike me as so conspicuously inferior to his brother Persimmon as some of the critics maintain. Like all his family he is improving, certainly in looks, and I should say in speed, staying power, and temper, later and more slowly than most horses; but when he comes out next year at Ascot, and wins the Ascot Cup,

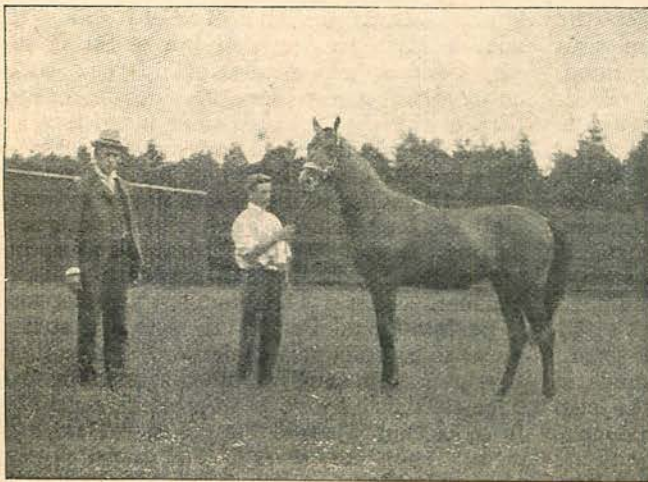


MR. RICHARD MARSH'S TRAINING STABLES.

I doubt if many critics will continue to call him a stone inferior to Persimmon; and when he goes to the stud I expect that a considerable number of good judges will congratulate the Prince of Wales on possessing the two best sires in the country. It must be an especial satisfaction to the Prince to reflect that the horses which have transformed his racing stud from a negligible quantity to the first in the kingdom have been bred by himself, and not bought in the sale-ring at fancy and farcical prices.

As my roving licence, kindly given by the Prince of Wales, extended to the Stud

Farm at Sandringham, I went over there from Newmarket for a day or two. Wolferton Station is three miles from Sandringham, and we drive up-hill along grass-bordered, hedgeless roads, where pheasants and rabbits sit in placidly contented groups, mildly curious about passers-by; whilst through breaks in the woods you see the waters of the Wash, a great plain of shining silver laughing in the morning's eyes. The buildings which we must visit are somewhat scattered. Fortune has come to His Royal Highness as suddenly as it has overwhelmingly, and brick-and-mortar work cannot quite keep pace with its gifts. Florizel II., whose progeny (noticeably a two-year-old colt out of Red Enamel) has already begun to race well, stands at Lord Marcus Beresford's stud farm at Newmarket. Persimmon and the mares which are brought here are accommodated in a small set of stabling near Wolferton Station; and the seventeen brood mares, with their foals and yearlings, which belong to the Prince are at Sandringham, under the eye of Mr. Walker, to whose brilliant judgment and sound, careful management, supervised by Lord Marcus Beresford and the Prince himself, the Royal stable owes very much of its recent success. I do not know of many men, living or dead,



FILLY BY PERSIMMON.

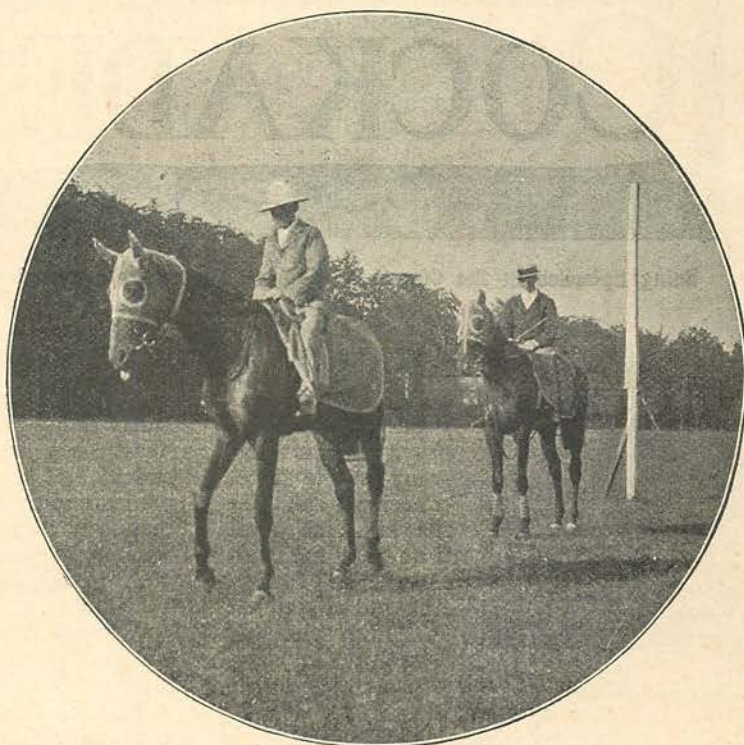
whose opinion about the breeding and management of a racehorse I should care to defend against the combined judgment of the Prince of Wales, Lord Marcus Beresford, and Mr. Walker. In the accompanying photograph Mr. Walker and his family are standing in front of the box in which Diamond Jubilee was born, the open door leading to a comfortably furnished little room where Perdita's attendants have rested. The

stud farm is, naturally, an object of great interest to guests at Sandringham, and a day rarely passes without the host bringing a party of guests across the big gardens to these roomy, plainly-fitted boxes, where prospective winners of the Derby, Oaks, and St. Leger are now playing by the side of their dams. The Princess of Wales occasionally comes, too, with other guests, and stays to have tea in a big square-windowed room in her beautiful dairy, which adjoins the stud farm. Opposite the entrance to this dairy is the grave of Perdita II., who died last summer shortly after giving birth to a filly foal. As she had had ten foals in twelve years her life work was doubtless done; and the tablet which is shortly to be placed there, recounting the deeds of her famous sons, is a stone in the temple of Fame which many an ambitious man might envy.

A mere catalogue of the mares and youngsters at Sandringham would be as dull as the catalogue of ships in Homer; but some especially noticeable creatures, besides the little sister to Diamond Jubilee just mentioned, who has been named Nadedja, are a yearling colt by Persimmon out of Red Enamel, a yearling filly by Persimmon out of Meadow Chat, and a colt foal by Persimmon out of Laodamia. The last-mentioned foal (whose dam was an unpleasantly notorious mare belonging to the late Mr. Fulton, and was bought by the Prince of Wales as a brood mare for 3,500 guineas) is incomparably the best-looking foal I have ever seen, and worth considerably more than the filly by Persimmon out of Ornament, for

which Mr. Sievier paid his 10,000 guineas. A yearling colt by Persimmon out of Laodamia will certainly win races when he makes his appearance as a two-year-old at Ascot next year; but he lacks the shapely perfection of his younger brother, whom I am inclined to look upon as a "good thing" for the Derby of 1903.

One small instance of the Prince of Wales's good nature may conclude this article.



FRONTIGNAN AND DIAMOND JUBILEE.

Quarters have been provided near Sandringham for officers invalided home from South Africa, and to all these gentlemen free permission has been accorded to visit the stud farm. Such permission is not at all frequently given. Orders to view the kennels, gardens, house, etc., are readily granted, but, as many holders learn to their great disappointment, these never include the thoroughbred stables.

It may easily be imagined how much pleasure is given to the convalescents, most of whom are Colonials, and all of whom must, of course, have many tedious hours on their hands, by this liberty to visit and inspect, when so inclined, the famous horses of the most popular race-horse owner in the Empire.