

## Rearing a Derby Winner.



HE great race of 1899, that which makes the little town of Epsom the centre of attraction from one end of the world to the other for a short time in the year, by the time these lines appear in print will have joined hands with the one hundred and nineteen Derbys that have gone before. It is perfectly safe to say that, wherever Englishmen congregate, there the Derby and the candidates for the "Blue Ribbon of the Turf" have been amongst the chief items of discussion. Indeed, such an interest is taken in the result of the premier classic race, that within an hour of its finish the result is known throughout the four quarters of the globe.

The inception of the first Derby is an oft-told tale, so that nothing more shall be said here about it beyond that it was run on Thursday, May 4th, 1780, and was won by Diomed for Sir Charles Bunbury. Of its history much might be written, whilst many stories of old-time trainers and jockeys might be told; but, interesting though it would be to trace the history and tell the tales, it is apart from the purpose of this

article to do so. Rather is it our desire to record by pen and picture the progress of the racehorse from his dam's side, through his early youth, until his proud owner leads him in the honoured winner of the "Blue Ribbon of the Turf" on the eventful Wednesday afternoon which shall send down his name to posterity.

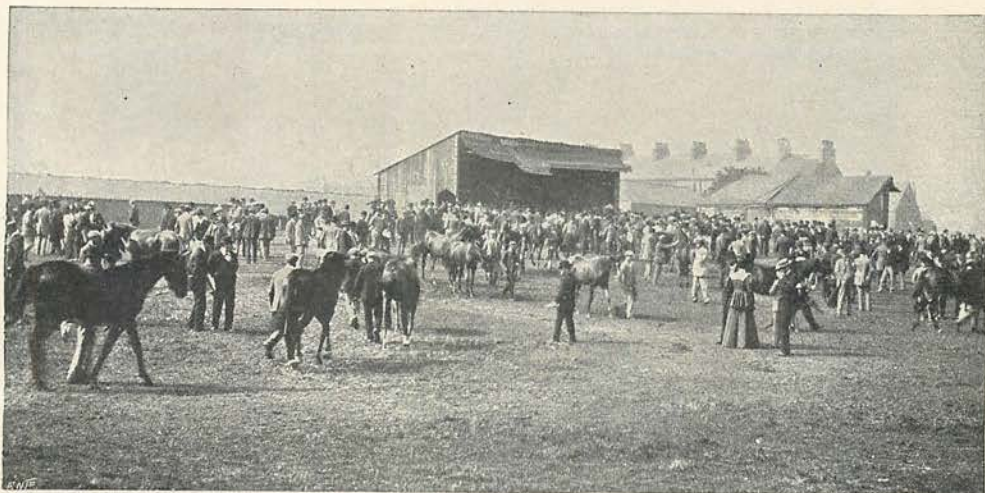
We will first take a stroll round the stud-paddock, where the friendly breeder has told us his favourite foal can be seen. There he is by his dam's side, with disproportionately long legs and big head, to all appearance as unlikely as possible to develop into a shapely three-year-old fit to run in and win the Derby. But an observant and capable critic sees many promising points that either escape the layman's attention or of which he is ignorant. The professional is certain, not only from his knowledge of the colt's parents, but from a sight of the youngster himself, that his career is not likely to end ingloriously, and is loud in his praises of the promising youngster. Here it may be well to mention that the age of a colt is reckoned from the first of January; thus, if he is born in December he becomes a yearling in the following



From a Photo. by]

EARLY DAYS.

[W. A. Rouch.



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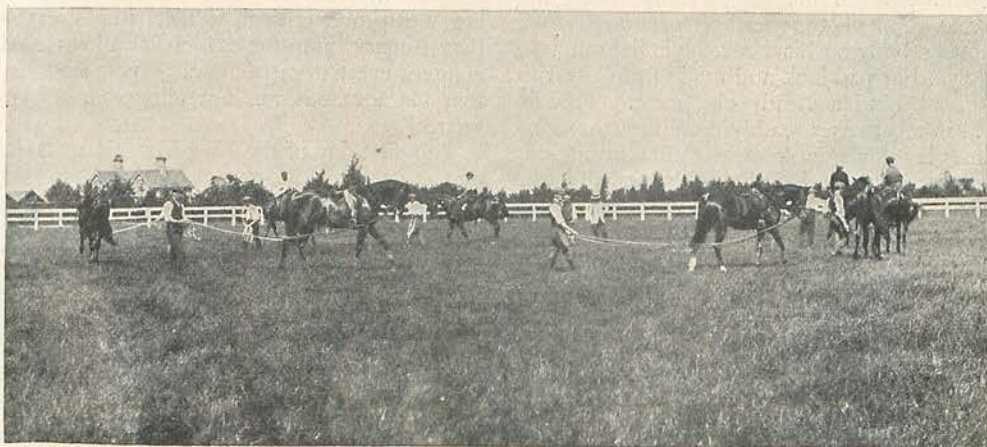
IN THE DONCASTER SALE-PADDOCK.

[W. A. Rouch.

month. For this reason breeders prefer that their foals should be born early in the year rather than towards its close. Various opinions are held as to the best month, but to take the view of the majority, late February or early March is reckoned the best time. The importance of the date of the foal's birth will be realized when it is explained that if he is obliged to compete with a horse who is both nominally and actually two years old, when he himself is little more than twelve months of age—although nominally a two-year-old—there is little chance of success attending, at any rate, his early career.

After leaving his dam's side the youngster generally goes to the great September sales, where he is handled and criticised from every standpoint. As in the stud-paddock, so in the sale-ring his points and

pedigree are discussed at length, and as Mr. Tattersall encourages the bidders, heads keep nodding until the brown colt by Jew's Harp out of Accordion is knocked down at a heavy figure to one who hopes both to recoup himself and to have the honour of leading in a Derby winner. Just about now the serious work of the thoroughbred usually has commenced. Some breeders of stock believe in beginning the preliminary education of the young horse earlier than this, but on the whole it is after the sale that the real schooling of the future would-be winner of the Derby commences. As with human beings, so with horses—and for that matter all animals—the effect of good or bad education is never eradicated. The fault most frequently found with racehorses is that they are disposed to be bad-tempered. Without allowing this for



From a Photo. by]

BREAKING IN THE YEARLING.

[W. A. Rouch.



From a)

IN THE TRAINER'S STRING.

[Photograph.]

a moment, it can be emphatically stated that bad-tempered horses are seldom born, but often made by wrong treatment and careless breaking.

One of the first and most important of the horse's early lessons, after being shod and handled in the stable, is to learn to bear the bit. From this he proceeds to more active schooling, and has breaking tackle put on him, in which he is led about daily and "lunged" on a specially-selected soft piece of ground. This exercise removes much of the superfluous fat which has accumulated during the colt's lazy foal life. The next step is to accustom the youngster to the weight of a saddle. From this the pupil goes on to learn that he must bear the weight of a rider, who generally takes his first mount inside the stable. When the yearling gets used to a moving body on his back, he is led out into the yard or paddock and made to follow with others behind a steady old horse. This he will in most cases readily do, although sometimes lengthy trouble ensues; but firmness is exercised until it is fully understood that the rider is master. The initial training of the young racehorse is now nearly complete, for he speedily begins to understand what is required of him, and soon learns to walk, trot, or canter as may be desired.

From now his day's work begins to lengthen out, till from two to three hours are given to walking and trotting exercise, with perhaps a few short canters interspersed. These are gradually extended, until half a mile can be covered easily. Then the youngster joins the

main string, is schooled by an older horse, and may be said to be thoroughly "in training." His gallops are made faster, and he is sent for spins with tried horses, until the trainer is able to judge with fair accuracy whether the name of the aspirant is likely to be added to the "deed-roll of fame." If there is promise of future greatness the colt's career is watched with anxious interest by the man in whose care he has been placed. With much truth has it been written, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a trainer's crown." Sleepless nights are frequently his lot. While he sits on his back, as the string gallop past, watching the future Derby candidate, misgivings often arise. Perhaps suspicions have been aroused as to the soundness of his charge. Possibly his employer has been over-critical, whilst the Press—that hungry monster which swallows and enlarges every item of news—has insinuated that his methods are not altogether above-board.

The first day of the New Year draws near, and at its birth the yearling becomes a two-year-old, and before many months have passed will make his first appearance on a racecourse. This is possibly at Ascot in June, but the form shown then and in the Middle Park Plate in October does not always truly forecast the future. It is as a three-year-old at the Newmarket First Spring Meeting in the Two Thousand Guineas that a more correct estimate can be made of the comparative merits of the future candidates for the Derby.



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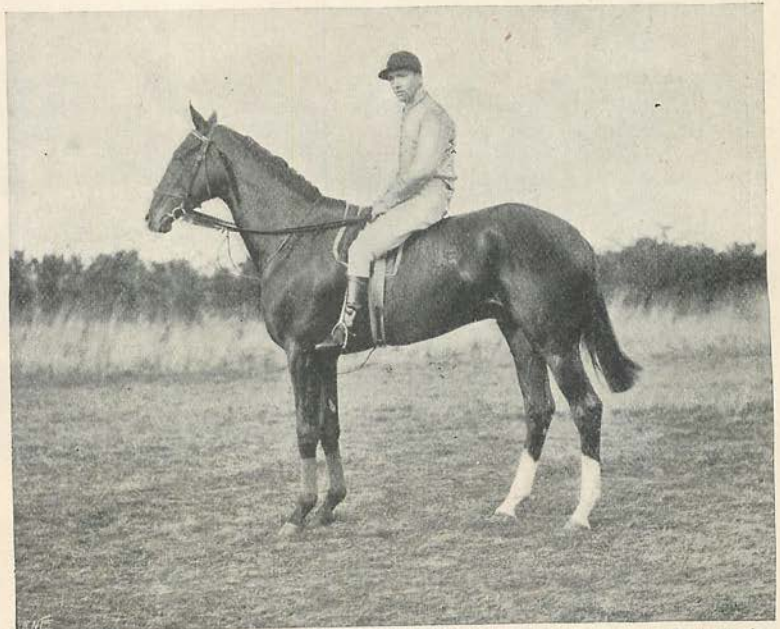
TAKING A HALF-SPEED GALLOP.

[W. A. Rouch.

inged legs of the Derby candidate, was sent to the arranged spot, and gave the watching tout an altogether wrong idea of the Derby candidate's powers. Whilst this was going on, the true trial was taking place elsewhere. Needless to say, the result of this trial was unknown to the tout, and the trainer lost a stable-lad.

Should the horse, whose history we are tracing, either pass the post first or show signs of speed, he is narrowly watched on the training ground, and gallops and trials are regularly reported in the sporting Press. Frequently this is just what the owner and trainer wish kept dark, and different schemes are devised to thwart the inquisitive tout. An amusing story is told of a prominent trainer, whose secrets from some source or another were continually leaking out. Suspecting a certain stable-lad, he let drop in the lad's hearing that the horse whose performances he wished to keep to himself would be tried against a certain other horse at an early hour next morning. As the trainer surmised, this information was duly conveyed to the right quarter. But the trap was set. In the early morning, before the named hour, another horse, whose legs had been whitened to resemble the stock-

gathered into a focus. The morning breaks, and the course is lined with a condensed, excited, and moving mass. The fateful hour is close at hand. Most of the candidates are in the paddock being saddled, and are, naturally, undergoing considerable criticism. As each is stripped the beautiful, shapely form shows up to perfection. The number-board indicates the runners, and then comes the preliminary parade. As the field parades



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THE FINISHED ARTICLE.

[W. A. Rouch.



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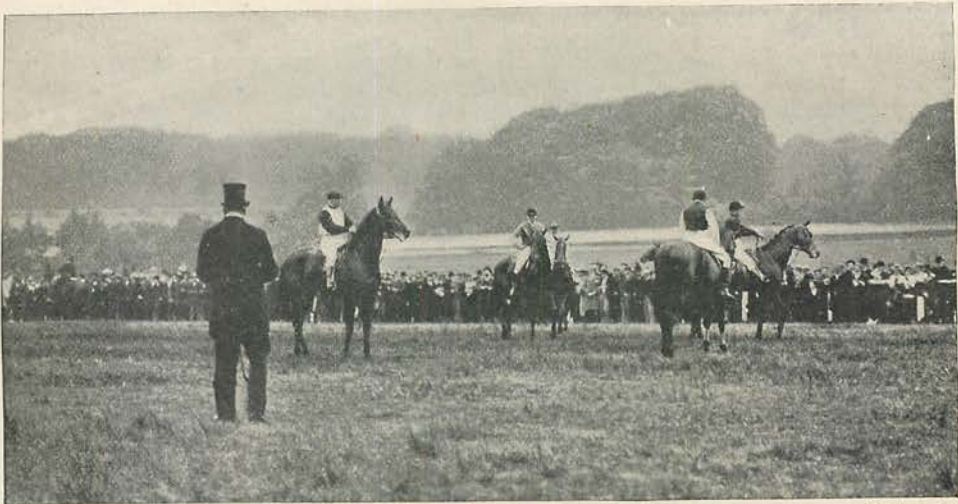
GOING TO THE POST FOR THE DERBY.

[Photograph.

past the stands and then canters to the post the eyes of all centre, first upon some particular favourite, and then move from one to another of the others. All the vast multitude is at a tension of excitement. The only cool and undisturbed persons present are the gaily-clad jockeys, whose looks of unconcern at such a supreme moment are to be envied.

much vexatious delay, the advance flagman signals a proper start, and "They're off!" is the cry, but not all exactly in line, though the ground so lost is speedily made good.

The great struggle has commenced. First one takes up the running, then another; but as the horses pass the City and Suburban starting-post the second favourite forges



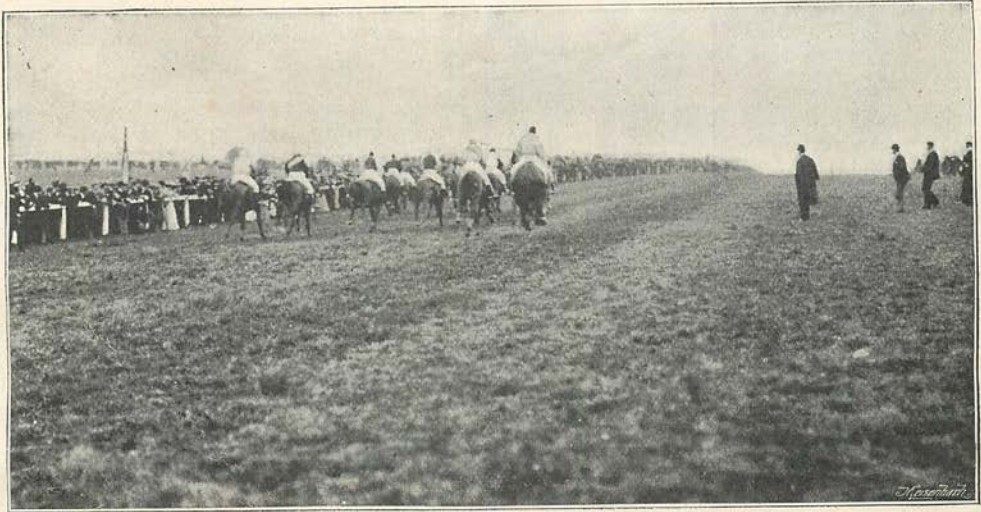
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GETTING IN LINE FOR THE START.

[Photograph.

The post is reached at last, and the starter has his field at command—nearly. First one fidgety and almost unmanageable candidate will break away, then another, startled at a sudden noise, will leave the line. But, after

ahead, only to be challenged. He meets the effort bravely, and before entering the furzes proves himself capable of keeping at the head of affairs for the time, although only a bare gap separates him from another competitor



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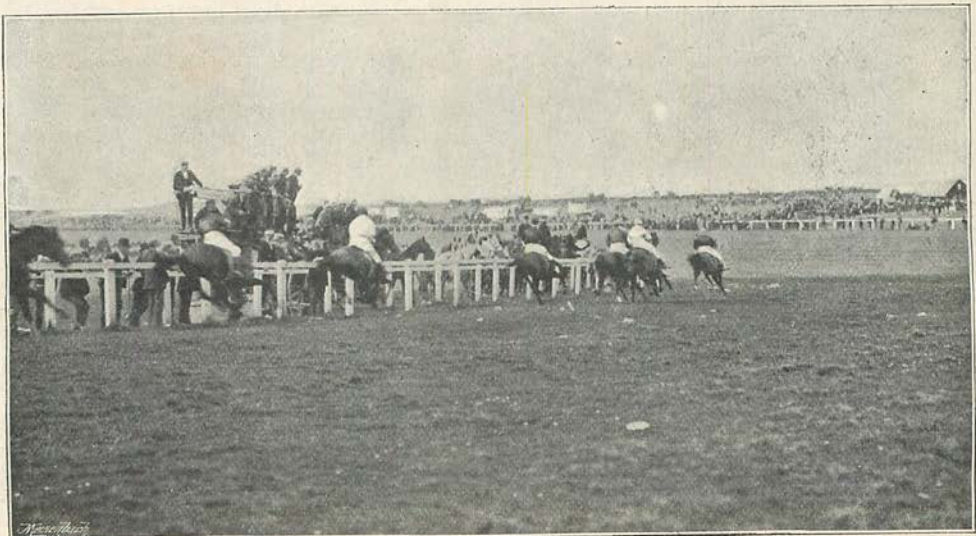
CLIMBING THE HILL.

[Photograph.

who has gradually crept nearer. At the mile post more than one has closed up, and there are now several in a bunch. At the top of the hill the leader has to give way, but in turn, at the descent, his successor is displaced, and half-way down the chestnut recovers his position. Tattenham Corner is rounded in a very short while, and then again there is an alteration in the order of running. A quarter of a mile from home several of the candidates seem to be in hopeless difficulty, and the issue resolves itself into a match between the first and second favourites. With rare patience the jockey of the former has waited his opportu-

nity. Inside the distance he sets his steed going in dead earnest, and a hundred yards from home obtains a real advantage over the chestnut, whose speed is almost exhausted, which is maintained until the finish, when he passes the judge's box a couple of lengths to the good. Shout after shout goes up, hats are thrown in the air, joy at the result is in the face of many, whilst disgust shows itself in others.

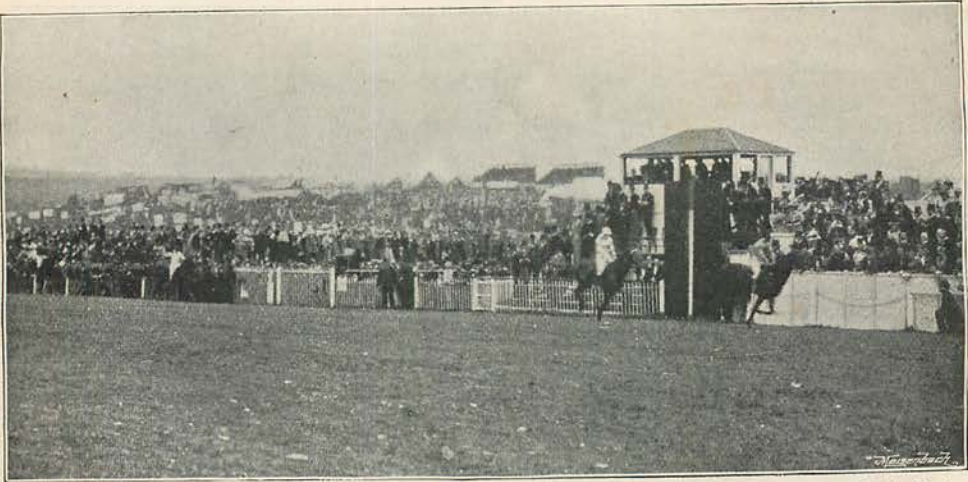
Meanwhile the proud, fortunate, and envied owner, who with the trainer has gone to meet his successful jockey, leads in the winner of the coveted "Blue Ribbon" amidst the ac-



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ROUND TATTENHAM CORNER.

[Photograph.



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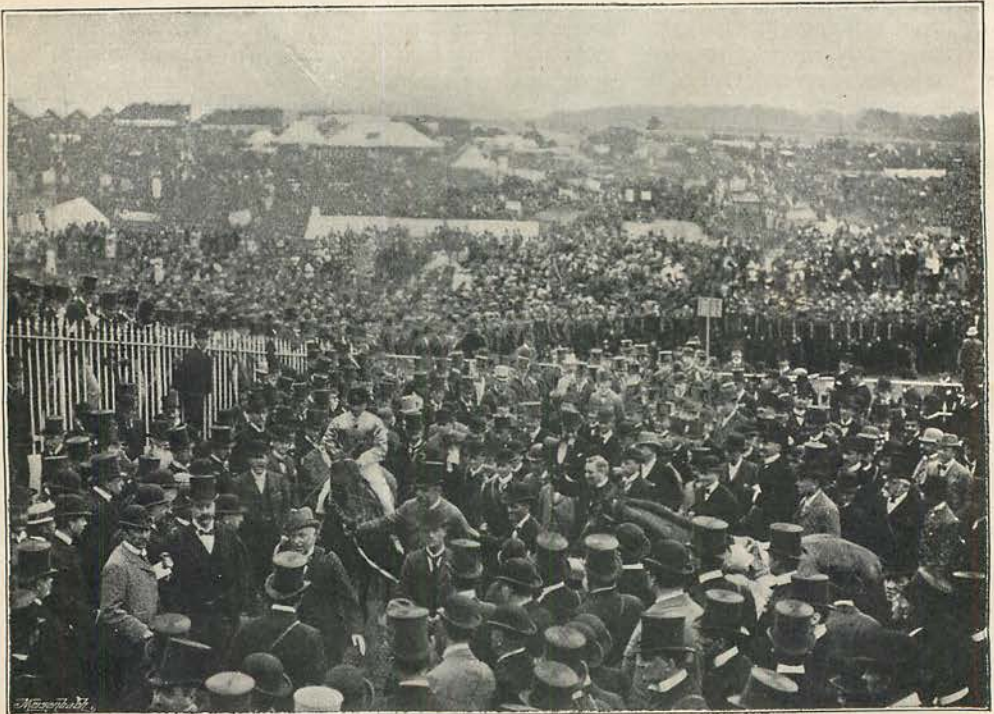
THE FINISH OF THE DERBY.

[W. A. Rouch.

clamations and congratulations of a host of friends and well-wishers.

The weighing-in inclosure is speedily reached, and the hero of the hour is unsaddled. The weight of his rider with the saddle is checked by the clerk of

the scales, who announces the expected—but none the less welcome—information that everything is in order, and the names of the winner, his owner, and jockey go to swell the long list of those who have won the Derby and immortal fame at the same moment.



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LEADING IN THE WINNER.

[W. A. Rouch.