

RACING IN AUSTRALIA.

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ORSE-racing is certainly one thing which is managed better in Australia than in any other country in the world. It is also safe to say that this sport is better managed at Flemington, the Epsom of Victoria, than anywhere else in Australia.

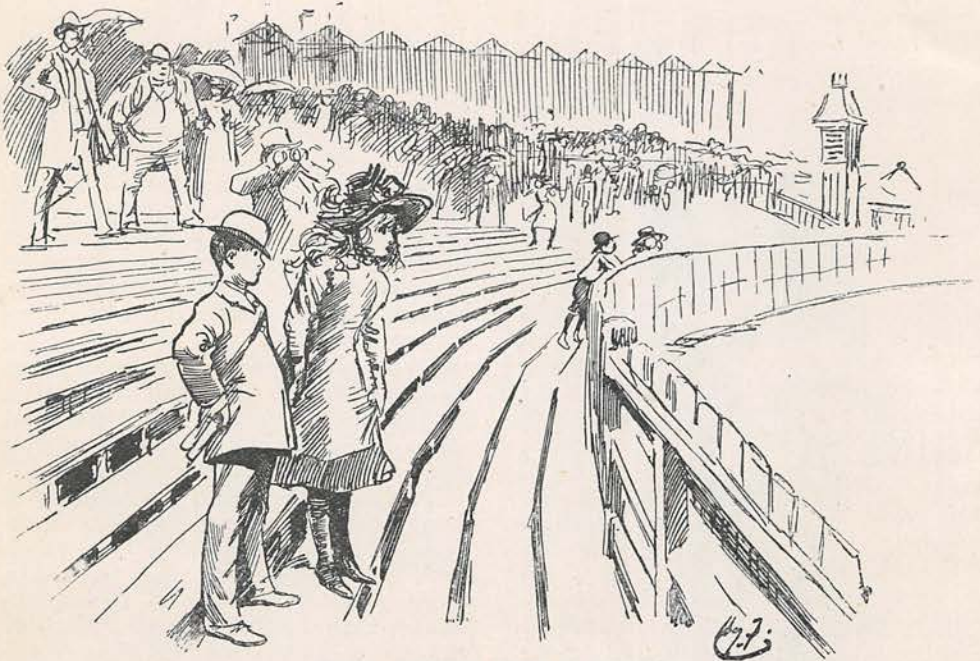
The differences between the conduct of racing in Australia and in England would take too long to treat fully. In the first place, in England, racing is for racing men, the

public being scarcely considered at all. In Australia the racecourse is for the people, and nothing astonishes the stranger more than the perfection of the arrangements for the convenience of the public at Flemington, the scene of the famous Melbourne Cup. Another thing is curious, and that is the quiet and orderly behaviour of the crowd at this racecourse. In fact, apart from racing, it would be difficult to find, all the world over, a better behaved or more interesting crowd.

Taken altogether, the race meetings at Flemington are among the wonders of the world. From the greatest to the smallest detail, nothing which ingenuity can devise or money procure is omitted. To take one instance, the ladies' boudoirs are as lavishly furnished as the rooms of the finest private houses. The management provide perfumes for general use, and upon the tables are placed cushions with needles, ready threaded with silk of all colours, so that a lady can sew on a button or put in a stitch in case of an accident to her toilette. Speaking of toilettes, it is generally understood that the annual gathering at the Melbourne Cup is, in point of dress, one of the greatest functions of the world. Magnificent as is the accommodation for the "classes," however, the masses are equally well provided for. Behind the



IN THE Paddock.



YOUNG AUSTRALIA TAKES AN INTEREST.



THE PEOPLE'S GARDEN.

grand stand the hill rises and affords a view of the course. Upon this there is a garden which any English squire might envy. Here the humbler folk can "camp out" with their picnic baskets and enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. Boiling water is supplied, so that they can have tea in their own way without expense. This garden is picturesque and wild, as though Nature had made it, and gives no uncomfortable suggestion of a need to "keep off the grass"; at the same time it is perfectly planted and kept, and is altogether an ideal retreat. At the back of the grand stand are huge letters of the alphabet, placed at equal distances—this is one more of the many happy thoughts of the secretary for the comfort of the public. The intention is to provide readily distinguishable landmarks for people who wish to appoint a meeting place for friends. An appointment to meet at a given hour at A, B, or C, avoids all confusion which might arise from naming a less definite trysting place.

The train service at Flemington is admirably managed. There are different exits for different parts of the course, and when returning, only sufficient people to fill one train are allowed on the platform at once. You take your seats in comfort, without any rush or crush. As soon as one train

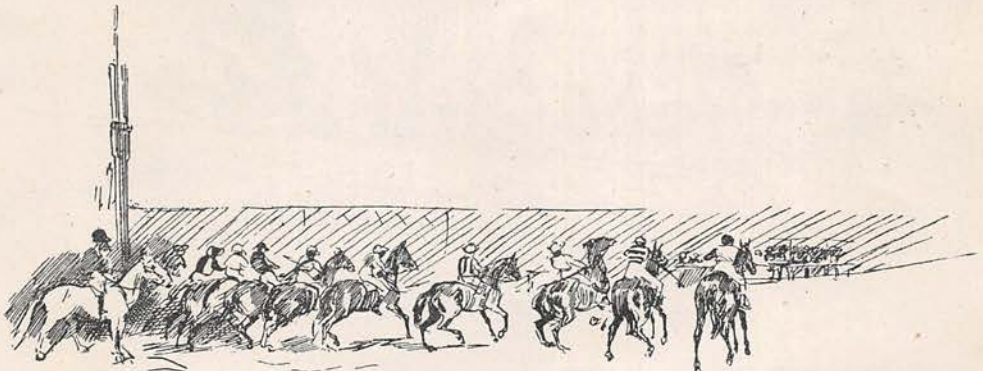
moves off another is ready, and everyone gets away without the least inconvenience.

Coming to the management of the course and the racing, there are several points upon which the Australian institution is much better conducted than similar places elsewhere. The "starting gate" is a remarkable innovation, and works to perfection. The use of this invention does away with all the tricks of jockeys, by which some make falsestarts purposely to fret and tire the cracks. The difference between a start with the gate and one without it is great. The regularity and machine-like promptitude of the one, as seen in Australia, makes the start on the old system, still in vogue in England, look ridiculous. Considering the long delays and unsatisfactory starts which the English custom involves, and the frequent

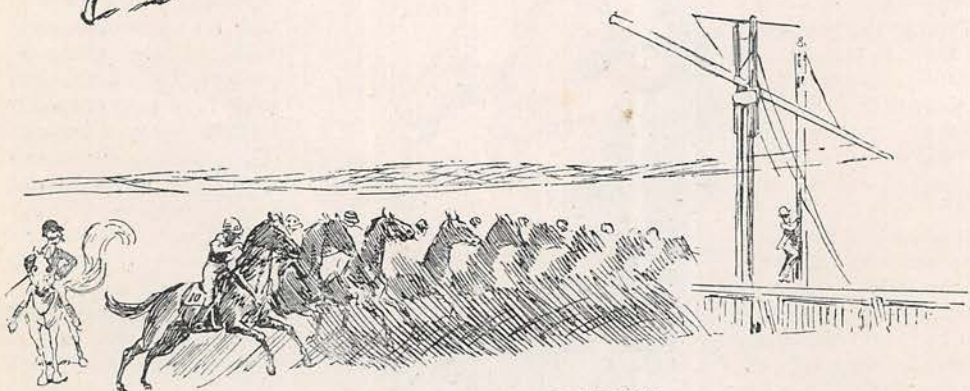
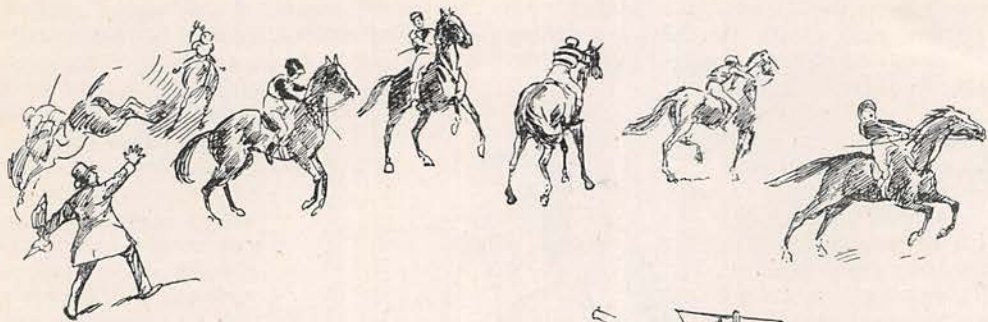
appeals to the committee against jockeys, it will not be surprising if the system is adopted at home. I have sketched the clerk of the course on his white charger—an old-time racer, I understand—engaged in superintending a start. As the horses cannot pass the "gate" until it is raised, there is no possibility of any obstreperous ones breaking away. It might be supposed that there would be some difficulty in getting horses to face this strange object, but there is hardly



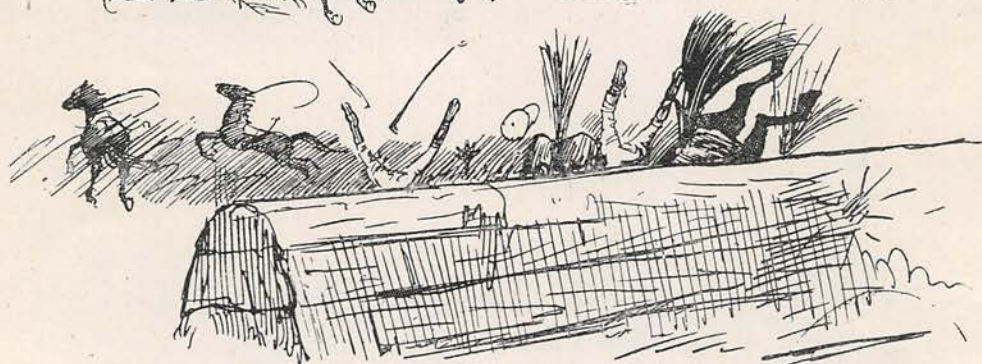
AN OLD STARTER AT FLEMINGTON.



THE STARTING MACHINE.



THE BRITISH METHOD OF STARTING.
THE AUSTRALIAN METHOD.



THE FENCE IN ENGLAND.
THE FENCE IN AUSTRALIA.
A STUDY IN CONTRASTS.

any objection on this score, horses readily getting used to it.

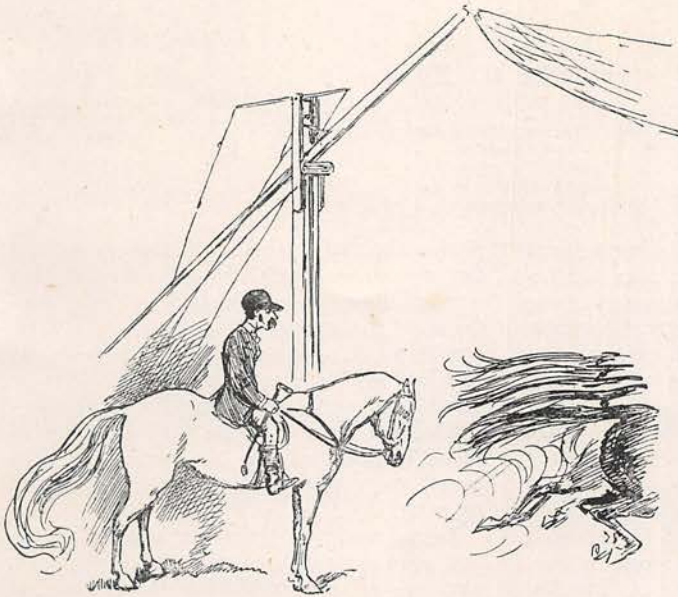
In another sketch I show Mr. George

your backs, ladies in particular finding the ordeal extremely trying. In England the course is a pandemonium, the rough element dominating the situation. In Australia, to a great extent, this element is absent.

Yet another difference in the actual racing is found in the sensational nature of Australian steeplechasing as compared with the same sport in England. Stiff fences and huge stone walls are fixed on the Australian courses, and the way in which the riders go at these formidable obstacles is sensational and the results often startling. Fatal accidents to horses are of quite frequent occurrence, and not a few jockeys are killed outright or maimed for life, while severe falls with more fortunate endings are so numerous as to excite no notice whatever. It is well known that a famous Australian jumper, racing in England, failed to obtain a

place in any of the chief contests simply because he lost time and labour in jumping high over his obstacles, not understanding a fence which is constructed to suit horses which can run but not jump.

The universality of the interest taken in racing in Australia is certainly conspicuous. Everyone goes to most of the chief races, and it is considered quite an ordinary thing for ladies to bet on the course. Young people also



THE CLERK OF THE COURSE.

Watson, who has officiated as starter at Flemington for many years. When I saw this veteran he was sitting in the weighing room, having been invalided, and obliged for awhile to forego his accustomed duties.

Some of the bookmakers of Melbourne have physiognomies sufficiently striking to attract observation, though it would be flattery to designate them as personally attractive. It is otherwise with the ladies, and it is somewhat of a surprise to a stranger to see fashionably-dressed ladies walking about the paddock unattended, admiring the horses and comparing notes, a thing which in England would be considered impossible. But then it must be remembered that every aspect of the pastime is different in the two countries, and generally the advantage is greatly in favour of Australia. In England there is a disgraceful disregard of public convenience, and, whereas from an Australian meeting you return home as spick and span as you left, in England you are lucky if you reach home without having your clothes torn off



AUSTRALIAN BOOKMAKERS.

appear to take an absorbing interest in the sport, and not unfrequently are seen indulging in the ruling passion for backing the winner.