

THE THOROUGHBRED

ONE of the most interesting and important, events of the American turf during the winter of 1900-01, was the birth of the Western Jockey Club. This organization, it should be explained, is not representative of any single race course, but is a parent governing body, much as is the Jockey Club in the East. It is the outcome of the dissatisfaction which has been so steadily increasing with reference to the Western Turf Congress, under whose authority the race courses of the middle West have in recent years been operating. The Turf Congress was badly managed. Its control appeared to be vested in men and interests which were out of touch with the advancement of Western racing conditions; while the smaller race tracks were, by sheer force of numbers, able to outvote and outvoice the larger, more progressive and more powerful clubs in the policies and deliberations of the Congress. As long as racing in the vicinity of Chicago was practically under the ban, the other sections of the middle West had virtually undisputed sway in Congress matters. With the revival of the sport in Illinois, however, its progressive courses naturally chafed under Congress control, centered, as it was, in the Kentucky and Tennessee interests; and the Western Jockey Club is now likely to put the turf in that section of the country upon a markedly better footing. The Turf Congress has become practically impotent by reason of having lost so much of its membership, these courses having transferred their allegiance to the new organization, and we may therefore regard Western turf destinies as committed to the latter body. One of the most important benefits which may be expected to result from the newer order of things is a better understanding of the middle West tracks with the Jockey Club in the East. The Jockey Club's control of the situation in its own domain is excellent, and the prospect of a thorough reciprocity with the Western body is fraught with promise of good for the American turf in general. One of the two great California racing associations is also known to have Jockey Club leanings in a pronounced degree; and stranger things have happened than that the long-desired National Jockey Club should soon be an assured fact.

DIAMETRICALLY opposite conditions prevailed in the closing of English and American entries in January. The English handicaps for the coming spring were heavily patronized, record lists forthcoming in some instances. In America, however, the traditional "Brooklyn" and

"Suburban" both show a notable falling off. What else could be expected? Our English cousins cater to the maturer horses, while we have been wasting our steam on the juveniles. This has led to the exportation of so many high-class horses that the seventeen American bred animals entered in England for the Kempton Park Jubilee, would in themselves furnish ample material for a good handicap and an interesting contest. An encouraging feature of the American situation, however, is the creation of a number of new weight-for-age events.

THE turf in Australia is now experiencing its summer carnival of racing, and the season will go into history as ranking with the very best. The St. Simon stallion, Bill of Portland, has to his credit this crack three-year-old of the year, Maltster. As his sons, Bobad and Merriwee, were the best of the two preceding seasons, Bill of Portland has the unique distinction of scoring a championship success in each of his first three stud seasons, and it is small wonder that the dispersal sale of the late Mr. W. R. Wilson's stud saw the horse purchased by English interests, which have promptly returned him to their shores. The Australian turf, it may be added, retains its phenomenal hold upon the affections of the general public, who continue to turn out in extraordinary numbers upon the great day. There, as in England, two-year-old racing is hardly more than a preparatory incident in the career of a race horse; hence the Australian thoroughbred is becoming more and more noted for his matured endurance and weight-carrying abilities rather than precocity and early speed.

THE winter racing in America is of comparatively little interest or importance this year. On some accounts it is a pity that it is not dispensed with altogether. On others, however, it may be comparatively justifiable. Indeed, the California race courses, Oakland and Tanforan, attract a really fair class of horses, and have little need to ask forgiveness except for fostering early two-year-old racing.

As far as New Orleans is concerned, however, it is about as a friend of mine puts it in a note from there: "Bad horses, bad starting, bad jockeys, bad riding, sleepy officials, and wide-awake bookmakers." And yet, all over the country, there are thousands of idiots who daily congregate in poolrooms and try to "pick the winners." If that curse of true sport, the poolroom, were eliminated from the American situation, such exhibitions as are given daily at New Orleans would soon be stopped.

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