

## THE RACES.

JUPITER PLUVIUS must certainly regard the Dunedin autumn meeting with disfavor. One of the days, at least, he invariably visits with unpleasant moistness, without regard paid to its effects upon the spirits of the sporting world, or even consideration for the pains which the fair sex has bestowed on preparing charming toilettes for the occasion. We do not, however, venture to say that the parties most interested in the racing object to a slight dash of rain, for we have been assured by enthusiastic fox-hunters that, in addition to a "southerly wind and a cloudy sky," they rather preferred a mild shower, as it seemed to settle them in the saddle; and it will be generally found that whenever some exciting amusement is on foot, a thousand excuses will be found, and a thousand pleas advanced in favor of all sorts of unfavorable conditions, atmospheric or otherwise.

This year the rain came down on the first day, and, fortunately, only on the first, the other two being exceptionally fine; but although it thinned the non-sporting or ordinary spectators' attendance, its effects were else imperceptible. The running was particularly good on each of the three days, and crowds hung, as usual, breathlessly on the various careers of the horses.

One is almost inclined to do a little in the philosophical-speculative line, as to what it is in a well-contested race that has such a power of excitement, and that not only over persons concerned in the event, but, as well, over the most unlikely-seeming individuals. It is not astonishing if some fair damsel, all gas and gauze as Rachel was said to be, but with modifications, who is interested to the extent of several dozens of Liliputian gloves, and otherwise sentimentally affected by the matter, palpitate almost to faintness as the horses come tearing up the stretch that extends in front of the winning post, and the affair is still doubtful. But why on earth the homely and substantial mother of three diminutive children—one of them being an infant in arms—who stands compressed against the barrier amongst the crowd, and who distinguishes the horses only through the colors worn by their jockeys, should, for the time, become oblivious of her offspring, double up her baby as if it were something kneadable, all but trample her other two children under foot, and elevated on tip-toe, shout for red or blue, by whose success she will lose or gain not a sixpence, is a question for psychology to fathom if it may. Can it be that, however bottled up, whether, as it were, in the most delicate champagne flask with abundant promise of sparkles, or in the commonest earthenware jar, bespeaking only muddy dregs, human nature is akin? It almost seems as if it were. And possibly, if there were no tiny *gants de Paris*, and no suspicion of anything more tender, the dainty demoiselle would be little less agitated; for all the field, while fate is yet in the balance, is in a tremor.

During the intervals between the races, a stroll through the crowd is not void of entertainment. Ingenuity can do no more, in order to induce this world's goods to change hands, than here is done; pegs and balls and cunningly devised holes, all invite the hand of the gambler. Fortune seems ready to be thrust upon the adventurous; it is but a throw and your capital is doubled. Yet try and try again, and prove yourself to be a tyro. There are more regular dealers too. One, in particular, offers some valuable article for a mere song; he is a public benefactor, ready to sacrifice his substance to the casual stranger; but his overtures are rejected, and he retires in disgust, pathetically offering to bet five pounds that, even if he expose a sovereign for sale at the unexampled price of one penny at any public gathering in the colonies, a stiff-necked and incredulous race of settlers will refuse to deal with him.

The snatches of conversation that reach the ear are now and then amusing, though occasionally we are riled by overhearing the remarks of some cynic from a neighboring province, who will have it that his country's institutions are superior to those that surround us. This we are inclined stoutly to deny. The racing here is excellent; the stand and the course generally are admirably got up, and as for the situation, can there be a more beautiful? It seems to have been selected by poets; here close by the breakers, amidst that sweep of verdant hills, and with the distant city arising full in view. A more fitting scene for the festivities he confessed to delight in, could scarcely have been chosen by old Froissart himself, who so keenly appreciated all that was pleasing to the senses.

## INDIFFERENCE AND ZEAL.

THE report of the General Board of Catholic Primary Education in England, read at the late great Educational meeting in London, brought out in a very striking way the indifference of the Catholic majority, compared with the zeal of the Catholic few, in the cause of Catholic education. The Government grant to Catholic schools in England—a little over £81,000 a year—is given solely on condition that the teachers are "certificated" and educated at a training school under Government secular inspection. The Catholics have three training colleges: one for masters and two for mistresses. Yet the Catholic public are most niggardly in supporting these three institutions, which the Marquis of Ripon stated were as efficient as any in the country, and yearly becoming more efficient.

It further came out, that among a Catholic population of over a million in England, many of them wealthy or well-to-do, there were not above twenty liberal subscribers to these training colleges, besides about 300 more who gave small sums; and it was moreover stated, that for the two training colleges for school mistresses, buildings of large extent and most convenient arrangement had been erected by two communities of nuns with their own private funds, thus relieving the Catholic body of a great expense, which otherwise they would have had to bear. In allusion to this, the report somewhat sarcastically says, "We have not been so fortunate as to meet with any community of men who have done so

much for Catholic schoolmasters." *Place aux dames!* The ladies lead in everything good and noble.

It is often made a subject of reproach against the Catholic religion, that it is fit only for women and children. It is quite true that women and children have ever been, and are now, the pride and glory of the Catholic Church, and fitting it is this should be so. It was women who "ministered" to our Lord or "wept" for Him on the most solemn and critical occasions in the course of His pilgrimage on earth, and it was children who sung canticles of praise to Him on his entrance into Jerusalem. To women, children, and the poor, the Church is indebted for much of her influence. So long as the daughters of the Church are faithful and zealous, she may defy all her enemies, and regard with a smile of pity their efforts to hurt her. The alms and prayers of the poor do more for the Church than the donations of the rich. But this is no excuse for the niggardliness of the rich, whose donations are often conspicuous from their absence or smallness.

The General Board of Catholic Education made a remark which the Catholics of this colony would do well to lay to heart. They said if Catholics be content that their schools shall be inferior in teaching power and actual results to other schools, a large portion of their scholars would certainly be drawn to Board schools, which have nothing to fear from short-handedness of teachers, or want of funds. It remains with Catholics themselves to say whether this calamity shall come upon them here or not. The time has come, or is near at hand, when we must have in this colony a training school, at some central place or places, for Catholic schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, under a Central Board of Catholic bishops and leading laymen. Poverty cannot be fairly pleaded as an obstacle.

OBSERVER.

## BOARDING-HOUSES.

If I had been born a daughter of Eve, the first question I should put to that individual, of what is termed the nobler sex, who ventured to pop the question to me, would be, "Have you ever lived in a boarding-house, and, if so, how long?" And if I received for answer, "Yes, my Angelina, for five years I have sat at Mrs. Jones' mahogany" (landladies revel, I have often noticed, in the name of Jones), I should politely but firmly remind him that I was not his Angelina, that my name was Miss Smith, and that he must continue to grace the mahogany of Mrs. Jones for five or fifty years more for all I was concerned, but that I must beg to be excused from ever sitting at the head of his.

A resident of a boarding-house for a period under five years, I might be inclined to regard with favor, but an elder boarder than that I should peremptorily decline. For a well developed specimen of the genius selfish man, commend me to an old resident in a boarding-house. It is beautiful, if not instructive, to observe his attention to number one. For the full-fledged bird you must go to the boarding-house where there are no ladies, and where the members of the other and nobler (Heaven save the mark!) sex are few, and have been long acquainted with one another. The carver in such an establishment has not a pleasant position. He certainly, it must be confessed, has not much trouble in discovering what each one likes best off the joint. There is no need for him to stand, knife and fork in hand, beseeching of the person whom he wishes to assist to tell him what part he can have the pleasure of helping him to. All that part of his business is made wonderfully easy. His questions on this head are all anticipated, and, heaven help him, if two of the boarders have tastes akin. His efforts in such a case to please both parties are not, as a general rule, crowned with success, always provided, of course, that he himself be not one of them. Then, indeed, one of these sympathetic fellow-boarders leaves the dinner-table quite satisfied, whatever may be the feelings of the other. And this explains the reason why the position of carver is so much thought of in boarding-houses. He is master of the situation, and where the motto is "each one for himself," of course the man with the joint before him has a great pull over his neighbours. The oldest boarder generally fills the post, and it is astonishing to what an extent he will go in asserting his privileges.

I have had some experience of boarding houses. I am not, let me hasten to inform any young and as yet unmarried lady who may happen to read these lines, a "five-yearer,"—if I may use the expression—so that I am still, and shall be for some considerable time, amongst those whom I have advised young ladies not to make miserable, simply because they have lived in boarding-houses. But my experience, though short in point of time, has been much, and varied in incidents. I have lived with the private family, I have had private apartments, and I have lived in boarding-houses, pure and simple, of all sorts and sizes.

As an instance of how completely wrapped up in one's own little wants and desires one is apt to become by long residence in a boarding-house, to the utter exclusion of any regard for your neighbour, I remember once listening to a hot dispute between an old boarder—the carver of the establishment—and the landlady, as to the particular quality of the joint he happened to be carving. The gentleman insisted, with all the freedom which long residence and a fair punctuality in the payment of his board warranted him in using, that the meat was not fit to be put upon the table. The lady warmly resented the accusation, and asserted it to be fit for the best table in the land. After much discussion on both sides, the gentleman finally clinched the argument by asserting, "Why it was so bad that I could not get a piece off it even for myself." After that the landlady collapsed; it was too convincing. It silenced even her well-trained and skilled battery of words. The manner in which her opponent delivered this last speech was refreshing, from its simplicity, and its want of the faintest glimmering of a feeling that he was saying anything out of the common.

Can anything, again, be more ingenious, when on being asked by the landlady which of two kinds of sweets you will have, each of them being of rather small dimensions, than to answer, "Both