

than fifteen hands, the jockey less than 5 ft., but he needed no leg-up and he had no help from the stirrups. He didn't pull himself up by the saddle, he didn't take a running jump, nor did he use a step-ladder: one second he was on the ground, the next in the saddle—and how he did it is his own secret. On his saddlecloth was his racing number—8.

The horses, the twelve acceptors, pranced and danced round the birdcage, shied sideways through the ornate gate, and breezed at half pace past the stand and past the crowd. It was three minutes before the tote closed, the bustle for tickets was quickening.

Up went the balloon; the horses cantered quietly to the starting-post. It was a sprint over 5 furlongs and they started from the back of the course. It wouldn't take long now. It wouldn't take long after they started, either.

There was all the agony of the start. Twice the tapes were broken; horses backed and turned sideways; it seemed they would never go.

Then they were off. There was a jockey off, too, left sitting on the ground: a riderless horse led the field. Round

the top turn they came, a bunched blaze of colour, swiftly moving. The crowd was on its feet; as the horses rounded the turn and came with driving feet into the straight, the shrillness of the loud-speakers giving the positions was lost in a roar that swelled to bedlam a furlong from the finish.

Where is No. 8? Where are those colours? There he is; we were on our feet, too—third, second, third again. Come on, Rufus. Flying, rushing feet, jockeys with their necks against the necks of their horses, whips thrashing, spurs flaying. They flashed past the post. Even a policeman was on his toes.

In the middle of that bunch—No. 8. And when the numbers went up, Rufus had finished fourth.

The horses came back sweating and heaving and tired. Some had spur marks on their backs, the skin broken. We could feel the warmth from their bodies as they passed. There was a salute to the judge. Later there would be explanations to owners.

Half an hour later all that was left of that day was a litter of tickets—green and blue.



ONE-ACT PLAY COMPETITION

A one-act play competition for Australians and New-Zealanders is announced by the School of Arts, Wagga Wagga, New South Wales. The competition closes in Australia on June 30, 1945, and the prizes are: first, thirty guineas; second, ten guineas; and third, five guineas.

The Playwrights' Advisory Board, Sydney, which will judge the entries, has offered to arrange publication of winning plays of sufficient merit in book form in Australia and New Zealand on the usual commercial basis with a percentage of the retail-selling price guaranteed to the author. The promoters reserve the right for a period to perform the winning plays at Wagga Wagga on a royalty basis. We have a limited number of entry forms and copies of the conditions, and service men and women in New Zealand and the Pacific who are interested should apply for them through their educational services to *Kovero*, care D.A.E.W.S., Army H.Q., Wellington.