

AUSTRALIAN SPORTS.

[From Anthony Trollope's "Australia and New Zealand."]

HORSE RACING.

THE English passion for the amusements, which are technically called "Sports," is as strong in these colonies as it is at home. Why the taste should have transported itself to Australia and not to the United States I am not prepared to explain,—but I think any one who has observed the two countries will acknowledge that it is so. Trotting matches and yacht-racing are no doubt in vogue in the States, and there are men, few in number, who take kindly to shooting,—especially they who live near the Chesapeake and have canvas-back ducks within their reach. There is a set of betting-men at New York, who probably are beaten by none in the ferocity of their gambling. But "sport" is not a national necessity with the Americans, whereas with the Australians it is almost as much so as at home. Cricket, athletics, rowing matches, shooting, hunting, flat-racing, and steeple-chasing are dear to them. There is hardly a town to be called a town which has not its race-course, and there are many race-courses where there are no towns. As I was never either a cricketer nor an athlete, and know nothing of shooting or of racing, I am not qualified to describe the fashion in which our Australian cousins fulfil their ambition in these respects; but I can say that they are ambitious and are successful. In Queensland I saw kangaroos, wallybies and iguanas shot down with precision. In Gipp's Land I was witness to a great slaughter of wild ducks and black swans. At Hobart Town, in Tasmania, there came off while I was in the neighbourhood a regatta, for not being present at which I was much abused. And I know that I was wrong, for the scene must have been very lovely. No spot could be better arranged for boat-racing than the mouth of the Derwent, with the open public park rising high and close above the water. I was inspecting a lunatic asylum at the time, and think that the regatta would have been more amusing. Horse-racing I hate. As the horses run I never can distinguish the colours; I generally lose sundry small bets; and I don't like champagne. But I did go to the Launceston races in Tasmania, in reference to which I can only remark that the number of betting-men who came over from Melbourne to make money out of the small performances on that occasion surprised me very much. When the meeting was over I went back to Melbourne with a ship-load of them, and was lost in speculation how so many carrion birds could live on so small an amount of prey. As to the professional activity of the confraternity, the diligence with which they worked at their trade, the unremitting attention which they paid to the smallest chances, I had no doubt. They all looked as