

## PONIES AND PONY RACING.

Once a year in Halifax a great deal of interest is taken in ponies and in pony racing. The interest reaches its climax on the 21st of June, and then suddenly and completely dies away. And with the exception of a few, no one thinks about these ponies till the fever comes again in the following year.

Every lover of horses and racing must deplore this, and regret that we cannot have many meetings during the season. Pony racing is not what it used to be in this community. I don't mean to say it is not as good—on the contrary, it is better—but there is not that same element of sport and fun about it as there once was, when the 97th and 101st were stationed here. I think the reason of this is that the class of ponies that have been brought here for the simple reason of racing, and nothing else, have been too good. Not that it has not been a good thing to have had these ponies, but all the same it has kept the owner of the average nag from entering and running his pony.

Looking at old race-cards, I find that there used to be as many as ten or twelve starters in each race, and generally with owners up, and even if the pace was not fast, the fun was.

We have at present more ponies than we have ever had before, and surely there are some of them that can race. We have also an excellent course for pony racing, and also excellent accommodation for spectators. Why, then, are not all these things utilized, and why can we not have many informal meetings during the season? I am sure the proprietors of the Riding Ground would be only too glad to rent the ground for the day at a very small figure, and I am positively certain that society would patronize it to an extent to clear all expenses, including a few dollars of "added money." Five races in an afternoon will fill the card nicely, and no doubt there would be occasionally a match between two ponies, to make things exciting. I hear some one saying at once, "Oh, what is the use? Tramp and Mignonette would win all the races." Quite true, if they were allowed to run, but could not we have races in which both of these flyers would be barred? It is impossible to handicap Mignonette after her showing in the Suburban Handicap, and the Tramp can give any other pony forty lbs. and a beating. But think what excellent racing there would be between all the others. Then again we could have hurdle races, which, by the by, were very foolishly cut out of the programme on the 21st, and in a hurdle race it is any one's race; or it would not be hard to have made a small steeple-chase course, like there used to be on the old ground. All the races could be sweepstakes of a few dollars, and if the meeting could add some money, all the better, and all the entries could be post entries, so as to make up a field. If the Polo Club could not take it up, could not a "Pony Racing Club" be formed for the purpose? I am sure it would be a success, and even if it were not, the experiment would be worth trying, just for the fun of it. One might say that all the racing the people of Halifax ever see is pony racing, and there are many who would patronize such a meeting just for the pleasure of seeing the silks and satins and the galloping ponies more than once a year.

Talking of pony racing, I cut this from an English paper. Funny things have happened on our own ground, but nothing funnier than this. The description of the weight might read for any of our meetings:—

Ringdove won the Pony Plate very easily, but perhaps the way may have been cleared for her to some extent by the falling out of Gas. Nearly twenty minutes was cut to waste by Mr. Hamilton in weighing out, but even after this delay the mare must have been saddled in very

careless fashion, for, after going a little more than a furlong, the saddle slipped right on to her flank and, of course, she at once started kicking. Thereupon the saddle came bodily off, and the mare, catching her legs in the girths, rolled clean over, and appeared to turn two somersaults before getting up again. It looked from the stand as though Mr. Hamilton was bound to be badly hurt, but fortunately this was not the case, as beyond a nasty shaking, he was none the worse for the mishap. It needn't have surprised anybody if instead of its being Gas's saddle that slipped it had been Ringdove's. The latter was carrying nearly 4st dead weight, the leads being packed into no less than five weight-cloths, which, surmounted with a big saddle, gave the pony the appearance of a miniature pack horse. She had to carry 21st. 7lb., which, under Rule 139, is the highest weight that a 14 hand animal can carry. It is too much. And what is more, there was no earthly object in it. There was no reason whatever why a 21lb. lower scale should not have been adopted.

Racing and Polo ponies are bringing an enormous price in England now, as shown by the following:—

The price of ponies still keeps up, as is testified by the sums realized for four ponies that I have previously made some mention of, the property of Mr. Locke King, of Cairo, and which have been played lately at Hurlingham by the 17th Lancers. The following were the prices obtained:—Star, 220gs., bought by 17th Lancers; Monk, 75gs., bought by 15th Hussars; Cambridge, 155gs., bought by 15th Hussars; Steele, 40gs., bought by 17th Lancers. 220gs. is a high price for an Egyptian countrybred pony, and is significant as showing what a good polo pony will fetch, no matter where he is bred. I hear that all these ponies were selected by Mr. Locke King from the Mena Hotel Stables, Cairo, and brought over as an experiment, and that, encouraged by the good prices he has obtained, he intends bringing over another lot next year. May they be all as good.

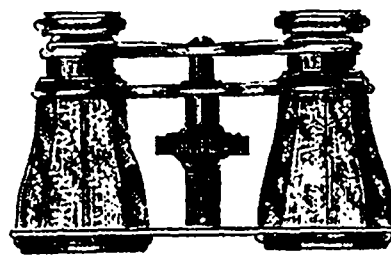
Here is a chance for enterprising Nova Scotians to make money—buy ponies here for \$70—train them to Polo and sell them in England for \$1,500. Not a bad profit. M. G.

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