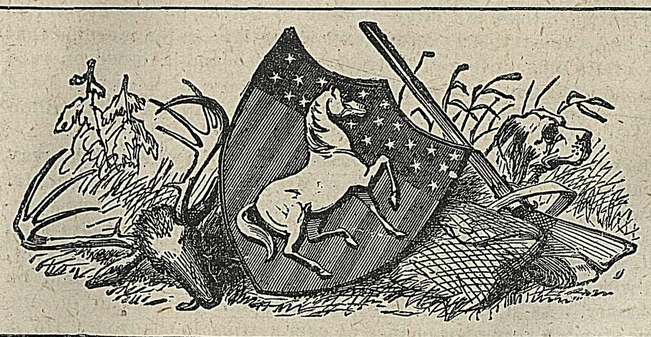

THE SPIRIT OF THE TIMES

The American Gentleman's Newspaper.

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NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DEC. 4, 1886.

IT was in a recent number of THE SPIRIT that we discussed the subject of two-year-old racing to considerable extent, taking our inspiration from the agitation now going on in Australia on the subject, and showed that, while two-year-old racing was, no doubt, rather overdone in the United States, it seemed to in no respect impair the powers of colts, so long as it was not overdone, citing many instances in support of the statement. We showed, too that while the tendency was to overdo it, the fault did not lie at the doors of the Jockey Clubs, but rather at those of the owners who now are forced to maintain such extensive establishments that they are forced to race their two-year-olds, or suffer great financial loss. We thought we made it plain at the time, but as some of our friends have been unable to see the logic of our reasoning we will illustrate it further. The cases of the colts Portland and Tremont in the Dwyer Stables, are good ones for our purpose. Portland won $15,320 as a two-year-old. At three he was worthless. Now, had the Dwyers waited until he was three, they would have been that much out of pocket. We are prepared to be told that it was severe racing at two that caused the failure of Portland at three. But we are not prepared to agree in that view. Portland was an ideal of the kind which excel at two, and do not "train on" after. He was light, narrow-built for pure speed, a delicate feeder and not the kind to stand a preparation for mile and half races, and the Dwyers, on the "bird in hand" principle, did perfectly right in the premises. With Portland they had about fifteen more, only two or three, among them Inspector B., and Millie, which amounted to much. Suppose they had waited with all these until they were three. Had they done so, they would have been sadly out of pocket settling bills for feed, training, traveling and forfeits. Tremont won them $40,000. In view of this, would it have been wise to wait with him? What guarantee have they he will win half that next season? Like Portland, his sun may already have set; he may die.

This is a go-ahead age. The expense of racing will not permit owners to keep horses until three before they race them, especially as they would miss so many valuable stakes. Since writing the article alluded to, some of our readers have asked us if we have considered the effect this is going to have upon breeding. We have considered it fully. Its effect will be to stimulate breeders to produce the sort of racer which performs best at two. It is simply a question of supply and demand. The owners demand a kind which will win the great two-year-old stakes, a kind which mature early, are closely knit, develop speed early, rather than the gross, loose-framed, slowly-maturing kind, which do not know how to canter at two and do not begin to gallop until three. Whichever breeder presents the type first named in the greatest perfection will have the best sales. Accordingly, each breeder will strive to meet the demand with a supply of the article demanded. It is this which causes breeders to ignore the best native horses in their anxiety to import or purchase English-bred stallions. The success of Eclipse and Leamington first attracted attention to the superiority of English sires in this respect, and that of Billet, King Ban and others since then have stir[illegible] the fancy, and at present it looks as if the [illegible] would be a struggle to produce the flash[illegible]

Throughout the history of racing [illegible] land, certain strains of race-horses [illegible] suitability for two-year-old racing [illegible] and are of the sort that mature e[illegible] quick on their legs, and essentially [illegible] course, such sires whose get show [illegible] with all the credit, and, as a rul[illegible] general appearance, but often the influence of the dam makes a great exception to the rule. We are not dealing with exceptions, however. Probably the first English stallion who attracted general attention by the excellence of his two-year-olds was Sultan, the sire of Glencoe. Indeed, such was the reputation the Sultans had achieved as two-year-old flyers that when Lord Jersey essayed the classic events and the cups with Glencoe, many believed that, being a Sultan, he would never stay, but he did, his stout Tramp blood on the side of the dam doing much to correct any of the alleged softness of the Sultans. Physician was another sire whose *In Memoriam* consists solely in the celebrity of his two-year-olds, among which The Cure was the best. They are said to have been of that smart kind which can slip away from the post like lightning and never be headed, but they went sadly jady at three, despite their brilliancy at two, not one of them ever winning a Derby or Leger. Irish Birdcatcher was, however, the most successful sire of two-year-olds in his day, as Stockwell and Newminster were in theirs, and in more recent years Hermit has quite monopolized the distinction, although Macaroni and Galopin have succeeded very well. At present Petrarch seems to be the most promising sire in England, not only of two-year-olds, but of even older horses.

It is, perhaps, drawing comparisons too invidious to designate which are and which are not the most successful of American stallions as sires of two-year-old performers. But that need not prevent our calling attention to those strains which have succeeded. Previous to the Civil War two-year-old racing was not sufficiently an institution to test the matter, but upon the close of the war the revival of racing showed we had no sire the equal of imported Eclipse, a son of Orlando. He belonged to Mr. Francis Morris, of Throgg's Neck, Westchester County. Mr. Morris had only six or eight mares, yet these mares, mated to Eclipse, enabled Mr. Morris to sweep the bulk of the two-year-old events for nearly ten years. The Eclipses routed the Lexingtons, Australians, Planets, and even the Leamingtons. The fact is, Eclipse was not only a capital race-horse himself, but one of exquisite beauty, and bred back to Vulture, his grandam, she being the speediest mare in England. The speed of his get was a revelation to Americans. Little Mack, Ruthless, Relentless, Alarm, Fanny Ludlow, Narragansett, Catesby and Remorseless, were among his get; but Eclipse's influence has extended to Spinaway, Crickmore, and Rhadamanthus, in the second generation, and to Foxhall and Dewdrop in the third. Leamington was the only fair rival Eclipse had as a sire of two-year-olds, and, even then, it is a question in our mind if Eclipse did not have the best of it while he had any representatives on the turf. Still, to the average turfite, the name of Leamington is a synonym of all that is great in two-year-old racing. Enquirer and Lynchburgh called attention to the precocity of the Leamingtons in the first year his get appeared (1869), and the galaxy of Hyder Ali, Parole, Olitipa, Aristides, Faithless, Spinaway, Sensation, Katie Pearce, Iroquois, Harold, Onondaga, etc., which followed, gave the brown sire of Chestnut Hill an enormous popularity.

Virgil was a worthy successor of Leamington as a fashionable sire of two-year-olds, for Hindoo, Memento, Portland, Virginius, Vagrant, and Tremont are a formidable lot. We think Alarm has done more to deserve credit, and received less, than any sire in the country. As a sire of two-year-olds we do not know a better. His son Himyar was probably the fleetest horse ever saddled in Kentucky, and both Issaquena and Pardee were first-class, while Panique was nearly so. Falsetto will, no doubt, be the crack sire of two-year-olds. Dewdrop and Jenny Treacy have created a regular furore for the children of the young Woodburn sire. They are not unlike the Leamingtons, being light-fleshed, easily trained, rather nervous, but narrow in front, with great length of leg behind, and built upon the lines of pure speed—racing machines. No horse, however, has shown a better type of two-year-olds than Falsetto's great rival on the turf, Spendthrift. He has had but a limited number of mares, but, to have Bankrupt out in 1885, and Kingston in 1886, augurs a great future, taking them as samples. Spendthrift was a very different horse from his rival, Falsetto. He was a stronger, lustier horse, a better feeder, and a stronger but not near so beautiful a mover. The preparation he had as a three-year-old, followed by his uphill victory for the Lorillard, showed him a horse of great constitution, as most would have broken down under it. His get seem to differ from him, being of a more delicate mould, but it may, perhaps, be accounted for by the fact that they are nearly all from very highly-bred English mares, full of the refining drops of Newminster and Sweetmeat.

King Ban has made a special bid for two-year-old events, and if he had sired only King Fox he would have fame enough, but Ban Fox, Queen Ban, and Punster are also in his column. Billet has always ranked as a sire of juvenile performers, as well as of the three-year-old and all aged classes, and Enquirer has always played a prominent part. Some of the Longfellows have run well at two, but, except Thora, it was late in the season. The King Alfonsos have held their own, but as two-year-olds some think the Falsettos can out-run them, for, like the Glenelgs, they are apt to improve with age, although King Alfonso got great two-year-olds in Lizzie Dwyer and Bessie June, and Glenelg got exceedingly good ones in Idalia, Louisette, Grisette, and Monitor. Great Tom got what was apparently a great two-year-old in Gen. Harding, and another in Thackeray. Bramble's daughter, Biggonette, was unquestionably a good one. As to Mortemer, while he got Wanda, we do not consider him essentially a sire of two-year-olds, as his get are apt to be overtopped, and, great as Wanda was, there is no telling how much better she would have been had she been waited with. Hindoo made a most promising beginning last season with Hanover, Jim Gore, Hinda, etc., and the Onondagas showed a lot of speed but did not stay as well as the future lots no doubt will. Rayon d'Or was another debutante, and his Roi d'Or, who was his best, was a fair colt. The California sire, Grinstead, gets all his colts and fillies with the precocity and cleverness on their feet necessary to two-year-old exploits. Like their sire, they gallop with rather a straight fore leg, and Gano, Volante, Mission Bell, Laredo, etc., are a lot that give their sire strong claims to recognition. With the rapidly growing competition in breeding, the struggle to produce the most popular style of racer is about to be fierce, and those stallions whose get do not shine at two, we are sorry to say, will be crowded out.

THE celebrated English race-horse Melton has retired from the turf, and will stand next season at the Falmouth House Paddocks, at Newmarket, at fifty guineas. Melton goes into the stud with the best wishes of everyone. He has been a rather popular horse, and his achievements rank him prominently among the greatest horses of the generation. In some respects he might be called a sensational horse. Old turfites are, as a rule, opposed to the first year's get of a young sire; also, to the first foal of a mare, and in England such was the prejudice against winners of the Middle Park Plate that it was declared no such colt could win the Derby. Melton was the first of his sire's (Master Kildare) get. He was also the first living foal of his dam. He also won the Middle Park, and broke the charm by winning the Derby. The superstition in regard to Middle Park winners as candidates for the Derby was quite excusable, for, since the Middle Park was founded in 1866, its winners had, as a rule, been Derby favorites of a most cruelly disappointing kind, and the public had suffered terribly by following them. The Rake, its first winner, burst a blood vessel on the eve of the Derby, and Green Sleeve, the winner of '67, started favorite for the Derby, and was beaten by her stable companion. Pero Gomez, who won in '68, was beaten "a half head" for the Derby of '69. Albert Victor, the winner of 1870, ran a dead heat for second place. Petrarch and Chamant, the winners of 1875 and 1876, both failed in the Derby. Beauclerc, '77's hero, was a hot favorite, but went amiss, and Peter, who won the following year, was disqualified by the death of his owner. Beaudesert, '79's winner, went to pieces; St. Louis, who won in 1880, failed utterly, and Macheath, the winner of '82, was disqualified by the death of his owner.

It was left to Melton to break down the prejudice which prevailed, and, although he did it, the public trembled in its shoes, especially after Paradox showed so strongly in the Two Thousand Guineas, and, truth to tell, Paradox made a strong bid for the Derby. But Melton broke the charm, and, despite the rumors as to his having "a leg," he added the Derby to it, and thus strengthened his claim to class which many had denied him. It has been the custom, while admitting his possession of speed, to cast doubts upon his ability to stay over such courses as those at Epsom, and especially at Doncaster, but he did it quite handily, beating Lovely, the Oaks winner. Aside from Paradox it cannot be said that Melton met a high class of three-year-olds. But his performances last season as a four-year-old were of a high order, especially his Leicestershire Cup, in which he conceded Exmoor 33 lbs. for a year, and 47 lbs. to Wise Child, beating them in a canter.

IT has been the custom to refer to racing as the sport of kings; a mere figure of speech, perhaps, but certainly it cannot be denied that no class of Englishmen are more loyal to the throne than the followers of the turf. Racing is a symbol of peace and prosperity; the government means the preservation of these; hence, those who love the one naturally venerate the other. With many Americans it may seem impossible to understand the almost extravagant loyalty of Englishmen to the Queen. That arises from the fact that we have no equivalent to the sovereign here. Our President is merely a chief executive officer, transacting the affairs of the general government. In England the Queen is the government. The year 1887 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the reign of Queen Victoria, and loyal Englishmen are busy making preparations to celebrate the event in manner becoming one so important in English history. Naturally, the racing community are among the first and foremost, and it is proposed to render the year memorable by a series of jubilee prizes. We understand the suggestion of this prize first came from Mr. John Kent, formerly trainer to the late Duke of Richmond and Lord George Bentinck. To the Sandown Park management, however, belongs the credit of originating the first of these Jubilee Stakes, which will be run at its Second Summer Meeting. But it is not going to enjoy the honor alone. Kempton, Epsom, Goodwood, and Newmarket are understood to be ready to fall in and help swell the jubilation. In short, the tendency is to have them at every leading English course, and no better way could have been devised to commemorate one of the most glorious reigns in England's history.