

GREAT BRITAIN'S RULER FOND OF PIGEON RACING

The King and Queen of England

Everybody knows that King George's horse Pintadeau ran fourth in the Derby two weeks ago, but how many know that the king won a big race last week? asks the New York Sun. Very few, one may venture to say, for it was a pigeon race.

King George, like his father before him, is a keen pigeon racer. Indeed, the royal racing pigeons seem to be more successful than the royal race-horses.

Pigeon racing is a modern pastime in the United Kingdom, dating back hardly more than 30 years as a properly organized sport. Today there is scarcely a town or village in the country that has not a long distance pigeon racing club of its own. The sport is particularly popular in the mining districts, where the pigeon has taken the place of the fighting bull terrier and the racing whippet as the miners' favorite.

It was about 1893 that King George became interested in racing and breeding pigeons. The late King Edward had established a small but select loft in Sandringham before this, but it was not until 1899 that he was successful in one of the pigeon classics.

This was the pigeon Grand National from Lerwick to Sandringham. The distance was 510 miles 1,705 yards, and King Edward's first prize winner covered the distance at a rate of 1,307 yards a minute, or nearly 45 miles an hour. King George, then duke of York, was third with a bird that flew 1,252 yards a minute.

The pigeon loft at Sandringham is built on land taken from the beautiful deer park which fills the landscape from west to northwest. The famous duck pool is situated about 500 yards in front of the loft.

From the loft a magnificent view of the surrounding country can be obtained, and herds of deer roam within a few yards of the pigeon loft. In fact,

An English New Year Custom

The country people in New England used to have a great many interesting ways of welcoming the new year, and many of them are still kept up. One of the things they believed about new year's was that if a woman was the first person to enter a house on new year's morning it meant bad luck for the whole household for an entire year. A great many old darkies in the southern part of the United States also believe this. The English country people also thought that when the head of a house entered it for the first time on New Year's morning he must have something to bring in with him that he had not taken out.



the pigeons at Sandringham live quite a semiwild life and can be seen roaming about the park in small flocks, dropping between the deer and then flying backward and forward to the royal loft.

King George evidently intends to follow in the footsteps of the late King Edward in connection with the sport of pigeon racing. He is the president of the National Flying club and has offered for competition in the Grand National race a silver cup to the winner of the longest championship race of the year from Dax. This is the most coveted prize in the sport and is recognized as the king's prize.

King George's loft was originally a cottage with an aviary attached to one of the lower rooms, in which the birds would take air when not at liberty. This has now been replaced by a magnificent new loft divided into three parts; one part is set aside for stock birds—that is to say, the pigeons that are kept to breed the racers.

The largest part of the loft is for the racing pigeons that have to fly in the competitions; and the other portion is for the youngsters, birds bred during the current year, which are also raced in the young bird races that take place during August and the first week in September.

There is one conspicuous feature in the royal birds, and that is the beautiful shape of their wings, the abundance of feathers with which they are covered throughout, and the enormous strength of their flight feathers and quills. It is no doubt this feature which has made the royal strain of pigeons prized by English fanciers, and in lofts all over the country birds descended from the royal loft have improved the strain until today there is no doubt that English fanciers possess racing pigeons equal in merit if not superior to any in the world.

The Commuter's Advantage

"I'm glad spring's coming, so I can live out in the country again," remarked a man on the car. "Now I'll get a chance to read the papers and magazines again and know what's going on in the world. I feel ashamed of myself for being as poorly informed as I am."

"But I should think you'd have less time than ever at home," suggested the other man. "You'll have to leave home earlier to get to your office in time."

"Yes, that's just it," said the first one. "I'll spend more time on the cars then. That's why the people who live at the end of a city car line are usually better informed than those who live only half way."—New York Tribune.

No Spectators Wanted

It is very seldom that the captain of a sealing vessel can be induced to take a spectator with him. This is not because the captain objects to any one watching their movements, but because the vessels are usually full and space is both limited and valuable. In addition to the crew there are the hunters to be considered, and should many seals be taken the ship is loaded to its utmost capacity. Indeed, if seals are speedily sighted and in large numbers, even the coal is thrown overboard to make room for the skins.

The ships return as soon as a sufficient number of seals have been caught. Sometimes the vessel is back in harbor again in a couple of weeks, loaded to the gunwale with as many as 30,000 or 40,000 seals, worth from \$2.50 to \$3 apiece. The crew of a single vessel has been known to capture as many as 20,000 seals in seven or eight days. Two seasons ago the crew of the Neptune secured 42,000 seals in 18 days, the pelts not only filling the hold, but being piled up on deck as well.

The watchers of the harbor know at once whether a vessel has been successful, for it is the custom to hang a broom aloft if the catch has been a particularly good one. Sometimes, however, the steamer is unlucky, and after buffeting about among the ice for a period of six weeks returns with only enough skins to pay bare expenses. The Southern Cross, for instance, returned on May 3 last to St. Johns with only 1,200 seals, valued at \$2,400, of which the crew of 170 men secured less than \$5 apiece for their seven weeks' work. As the ice fields may be more than 100 miles in breadth and of unknown length, the sealer may be weeks running along the edge of the field before the lookout detects the little dark spots which show the presence of the prey. The annual catch of seals runs well over 500,000, and the total value of the industry to Newfoundland is about \$1,500,000.—Wide World Magazine.

A "Long" World

No shadow of pessimism had clouded his young life until shortly after his third birthday, when his vaccination was "taking," says Harper's Bazaar. Not that there was any display of unmanly weakness, for the very sore arm and the rainy weather were both endured with cheerful fortitude; but on the morning of the third day the little man looked out into the weeping landscape and sighed:

"Well, I don't think this is a very nice world. It takes so long to get morning; and then it takes so long to get night."

SINGING A FIRE TO SLEEP

When Charles Kellogg of San Francisco announced that he could sing a fire out there was scoffing among the unbelievers. They had heard of this man before and knew he had done remarkable things. They knew he could imitate any bird he admired in the woodland; that he had been able to procure wonderful pictures of wild animals through the Sierra mountains, because he made them completely unafraid of his singing; they knew that serpents had absolutely no terrors for him. But a fire, they argued, "has no life, no mind, therefore it can not be hypnotized, tamed or lulled."

Nevertheless fires are being "sung out" under test conditions.

Fire, says Kellogg, who denies all wizardry, is vibration; and just as it has been shown in the laboratory that one vibration may annul, control, silence another, so the proper one will still the vibration of fire, and, when the vibration is stilled the fire is out.

Kellogg makes no claim that any human voice can sing to quietude the vibrations of a conflagration. The extinguishing vibrations must be of volume commensurate with those to be

controlled, but he does maintain that the fire fighting operation in the future will be based upon these principles. According to this theory one may live to see giant tuning forks or musical instruments taking the place of the fire engines.

Kellogg was born in the California mountains, where he grew up in close touch with nature. His ability to reproduce musically all sounds of mother earth is phenomenal.

Make a few simple little experiments in vibration on your own account. Hold an empty cigar box in your hands in the room where some one is playing the piano, and every now and then you will feel that box vibrate. Try singing in a room where there are several small stringed instruments and you will be pleased sometimes to hear a string sing with you.

The soothing, healing power of music in treating the insane has called forth remarks lately. Will the physician of the future take temperatures with a tuning fork and prescribe harmonious chords to allay fever or a "concord of sweet sounds" to hasten the knitting of bones?—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

The Book Borrowing Habit

Some girls have the very bad habit of borrowing books and never returning them. The owner of perhaps a dearly prized book does not like to be uncivil and actually refuse the loan of a book and yet she feels that her valued possession, once out of the house, is likely to remain absent for many a month, and that her nervous, "Oh, by the way, dear, have you finished with that book I loaned you?" will be met with, "How careless of me, dear; of course, I've read it long ago; I'll bring it back tomorrow," and the "tomorrow" never comes.

Years ago it was customary to write in the fly leaves of books, especially attractive ones, likely to be pounced on by would-be borrowers, a sort of "take notice" for the careless and forgetful, and three of these old time verses may still serve their original purpose today:

"If thou art borrowed by a friend,
Right welcome shall he be
To read, to study—not to lend.
But to return to me."
"Nothing that imparted knowledge doth
Diminish learning's store;
But books, I find, if often lent,
Return to me no more."
"Read slowly, pause frequently, think
seriously,
Keep cleanly, return duly,
With the corners of the leaves not
turned down."
—Philadelphia Inquirer.

Exceedingly Apt

During his first curacy, says the Youth's Companion, a clergyman found the ladies of the parish entirely too helpful. Such a storm of petty squabbles arose from their over eagerness to help that, in despair, he gave up the place. Not long afterward he met his successor.

"How are you getting on with the ladies?" asked the escaped curate.

"Oh, very well," was the answer.

"There's safety in numbers."

"I found it in Exodus," was the quick reply.

A Prize Winner

"What are these cups for?" asked a well dressed man of a jeweler, pointing to some lovely silver cups on the counter.

"These are race cups to be given as prizes."

"If that's so, suppose you and I race for one?" And the stranger, with the cup in hand, started, the jeweler after him. The stranger won the cup.—Key-stone.

Taking the Easier

Mrs. Messer—Now, Tommy, go and kiss your auntie, or mamma will whip you hard.

Tommy (after a long look at the auntie)—Whip me, ma!

Singing Blackbirds

The blackbird, which belongs to the thrush family, has strong imitative powers and has even been taught to speak. There is not much variety in its natural song, but its voice has a pure, flute like tone and full volume, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. The bird is very susceptible of being trained, and when reared by hand from the nest is capable of forming strong attachments and makes itself a great favorite.

When a blackbird is six or eight weeks old his training should be begun. Take him to a quiet room, away from any other birds, and each night and morning whistle the portion of the tune you wish him to learn or play it on the flute. Feed him before you begin and put a fat, lively worm where he can see it. After you have whistled or played the air, say 20 times, stop so that the bird may have an opportunity of imitating it.

If he should make the attempt, give him the worm at once, praising and caressing him meanwhile. He will soon begin to see why a reward was given to him, and he will not be slow in trying to earn it. When once he has learned the tune he will never forget it, and it will pass into and become a part of his song.

After the blackbird has completed his education he should be placed near some other singing bird, whose notes he would soon learn and blend with his own.

Put his cage out of doors whenever the weather permits and he will tell you how pleased you have made him. But during the hot days of summer let him be well shaded and kept cool, as heat and dry air seem to affect his voice. He will begin to sing in the end of February or the beginning of March, and will continue until the fall, if the summer is not too hot.

Where?

A lady, who gave herself great airs of importance, on being introduced to a gentleman, said, with a show of much indifference, "I think I have seen you somewhere."

"Very likely," replied the gentleman, with equal sang froid, "I have been there frequently."

Marvelous

Bobby—This sailor must have been an acrobat.

Mother—Why?

Bobby—Because the book says, "Having lit his pipe, he sat down on his chest."