

HOMING PIGEONS.

POINTS FROM FANCIERS ON THESE INTELLIGENT BIRDS.

Careful Observers Declare That the Birds Fly by Sight—The Four Points in Homing Pigeons Which Fannciers Consider of Prime Importance.

What the peculiar gift is which enables the pigeon to return to its home from great distances is a matter upon which authorities disagree. The most general opinion among those who know anything of the subject is that the birds fly by sight alone. This theory would seem to be borne out by the fact that the best and most highly bred of racing birds have frequently been lost in the London fogs. The fact that instinct is unerring and that the homing pigeon not only frequently errs, but exhibits at times great indecision as to the correct course for him to pursue, seems to preclude the idea that he is governed solely by instinct. The theory which is most generally accepted is that the bird is gifted with remarkable eyesight and also with a memory for landmarks which is superior to a similar faculty in any other animal. That the bird possesses a high order of intelligence is shown from the fact that homers which have become lost in a race will frequently return to the room in which they have been kept at the starting point of their speed test.

In selecting homing pigeons for racing purposes even the best fanciers often pick out birds as most like racers that cannot fly 20 miles without becoming lost. The meanest, most scraggy looking bird, without a single good point, sometimes leaves its handsome competitor, who is, to all appearances, perfect in physical proportions, far in the rear. Still, fanciers look with interest at four points in a homing pigeon which are considered of prime importance. The first of these is, strange as the fact may appear to a novice in the art, the eye. Mr. Starr, one of the foremost and most successful of American fanciers, has this to say of the eye:

"The white eye may mean the cumulet, and, if so, indicates that the bird will fly high, have great endurance and wing power. If the eye is dark, the head round and the beak short and close fitting, there will be a preponderance of the owl type, and the result will be that the bird will fly later at night than any other type. But, whatever the character of the color, the ball must extend beyond the line of the head and be so placed that the bird should have a view of what is behind as well as before it. When a bird returns from a journey over much new territory, this protrusion of the eyeball is greatly increased, showing to what a great strain the powers of vision have been subjected."

While Mr. Starr, in common with other successful American fanciers, pays little or no attention either to the size or shape of the head, this point is the second at which European fanciers look with interest. It is generally conceded that the shape makes but little difference. The skull may be flat, long and narrow, or high, short and wide, but it must have room for the brain, and for a large brain at that, or else the bird is not considered a likely candidate for racing honors. Great stress is laid on this organ by all Belgium and Holland fanciers, but in this country the feature is almost entirely overlooked.

The chest should be broad and is of as great importance as the wing. A narrow chested bird can fly no great distance without exerting the muscles which give fullness to the breast beyond their endurance. The wings and tail should both be exceptionally long, as the tail acts as a rudder, and the shorter wings require much added exertion for the same amount of flying.

The color of a pigeon has no significance, but the rule in breeding is to cross the colors when practicable.

Even the best bred of the homers require most careful and intelligent training before they are entered in races. While the physique of the bird is well developed at the age of 10 weeks, it is thought best to give a considerably longer time for the brain to develop before the bird is trained for the work which lies ahead of him. At the age of 4 months the first trial trips may be made, and he is then flown from distances of between 2 and 90 miles at intervals of two or three days apart. Many birds are lost in these trial trips, and those which return safely from the longer trial trips may be considered fit to enter in the young bird races. The shortest of these is 100 miles in length, and birds are not supposed to be flown more than 90 miles before taking part in the speed trials.

For the young birds the system of training is supposed to accomplish two widely different results. In the first place they teach the young bird to return to his loft, and in the second they develop the muscles and prepare them for the hard work which the races will require of them. Training trips for older birds are made with the sole view of getting their muscles limbered up again and toughened for the longer races.—Chicago Chronicle.

Mark Twain on Interviewing. Mark Twain does not like to be interviewed. His opinion of the literary ability of the average interviewer is not at all flattering to the latter either. In a talk with Rudyard Kipling, Mark Twain once said: "I think the poorest article I ever wrote and destroyed was better worth reading than any interview with me that ever was published. I would like just once to interview myself, so as to show the possibilities of the interview."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The forget-me-not has two or three emblematic meanings. One is suggested by its name; the other was probably originated by its color. Blue among flowers is generally associated with the tender passion.

In 12 days' time the distance between New York and St. Petersburg may be traversed.

A QUEER EPITAPH.

In Memory of Two Boys Who Thought They Ate Mushrooms.

Piscataway is one of the oldest towns in New Jersey. It was founded in 1660 and was intended to be the capital of the colony, but it did not grow, while its rivals, New Brunswick, Rahway and Elizabeth, became thriving villages. At present there is little to interest the casual visitor to the sleepy village, but that little is good of its kind.

There is old Mr. Mundy, the village wheelwright, who at 80 is still a fine shot with gun or rifle. Twenty-five years ago he accompanied a New York merchant on a hunting trip to the far west, and since then not a year has passed without their taking a hunting trip to the west or south. Old as these cronies are, they cannot make up their minds to forego their hunting. Then there is the old cider mill whose ramshackle appearance belies the purity and strength of the applejuice resting in its dark cellar. Finally, there is the cemetery of the old Episcopal church, the first house of worship erected in the place. In response to inquiries the other day the sexton, who holds also the offices of gravedigger and roadmaster said:

"Well, there might be some interesting gravestones there, and then again there mightn't. They don't interest me. There is one old brown stone which has fallen down and is out of place. I wanted to throw it away, but the minister wouldn't let me. That might be interesting to you."

"Is there any inscription on it?" "No, there isn't. It is just covered with words from top to bottom—no poetry, no nothing—just words."

The stone was found easily, although partly overgrown with moss and myrtle. After much cleaning the following inscription was made out:

Spectators, under Here in this tomb Lie 2 boys. The older was full Ten years old, the younger was twice Told. By eating Mushrooms for Food rats, in day Time they poisoned Were. A. K. Hard Hooper and Charlie Hooper, Deceased, 1890.

The meaning of "the younger was twice told" is somewhat obscure, but it is supposed that he was but five years old.

An inscription upon the tombstone of James Thompson, who died in 1763, was once very popular with the country people in New Jersey. Three others in the graveyard are similar to it:

Remember, friend, as you pass by, As you are now so once was I. In health and strength, though here I lie, As I am now so you must be. Prepare for death and follow me.

JAWS AS WEAPONS.

Chief Means of Defense Among All Old World Apes.

Among all old world apes the teeth are the chief weapons for defense against natural foes and for combats for mates or tribal supremacy. The canines are in most cases enormously developed, inasmuch that ill informed naturalists have suggested that a near relationship must exist between the primates and the carnivora. As a matter of fact, these formidable teeth have nothing to do with alimentation, but are as purely weapons of war as are the bayonet and the maxim gun. In practically every emergency demanding unusual energy, obstinacy and courage they come into play.

In every conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil—as such things are understood in pithecooid society—the temporal and masseter muscles are the chief arbiters of war. To become a great and powerful anthropoid it is absolutely and brutally necessary to have a large and strong jaw, to give firm attachment to the teeth and good leverage to the muscles. That for an immense epoch our prehuman ancestors achieved success in life in like manner is as clear as the print of "Maga" to those who have learned to read nature's handwriting.

Since those days of true Arcadian simplicity our life has become bewilderingly complex, and our methods for settling social difficulties have changed generally for the better. But here, as in so many other instances, the habits of a past age have left an indelible impress on the nervous system.—Blackwood's Magazine.

Mountains.

There used to be held, in accordance with Murchison's well known geological views, the general theory that mountains were mainly due to cracks which took place in the surface of the earth in remote periods, but this idea is no longer entertained by scientific men. As to the form of mountains, that which is known as table mountain finds the best example, curiously enough, at the cape of Good Hope, a mountain, it is believed, due not to any action or phenomenon of upheaval, but to the sinking of the surrounding districts or territory. Why these peculiarly defined areas did not sink was owing, it is thought, to the probable fact that the ground under them cooled before the rest of the section, and thus the table mountain had the earlier foundation and has long retained its place. There would always be denudation, however, though proportionate with its surroundings, and therefore, owing to this fact of being higher at the start, it still keeps to its approximate elevation.

No Thanks.

A Bath physician has been having hard work to get one of his patients, a small boy, to take the medicine that he has prescribed. One day he offered the little fellow 5 cents if he would take it. The offer was accepted, the medicine taken, and the physician handed him the money. "Aren't you going to thank the doctor?" asked the mother. "No, I'm not. I don't thank people for paying me what I earn!" was the reply.—Augusta (Ga.) Journal.

Carborundum.

The manufacture of carborundum is one of the most unique of the established industries, and that of Niagara is one of the most important in connection with it. The material is now generated by a process which is now well known. It is a compound of silicon and boron, and its appearance presents a crystalline luster, iridescent with many colors, the valuable property of the substance consisting in its extreme hardness, in which respect it stands next to the diamond, and consequently is coming into extensive use as a polishing and abrasive agent. In the process of manufacture, quartz sand, coke, sawdust and salt are intimately mixed. This material is placed in the furnace around a large cylinder of coke and the entire mass covered up and finally walled in with a loose framework of bricks. At the ends of this furnace are the poles or electrodes of a powerful electric circuit, and when the current is turned on an intense heat is produced, which results in a chemical combination of the carbon of the coke and sawdust and the silicon of the sand. The process is continued for 24 hours, and then, after cooling, the carborundum is extracted, a series of operations finally preparing it for the market.—New York Sun.

Running For Office.

A gentleman who is usually a home keeping man, but who was induced to enter the race for a minor office early in the campaign was "giving his experience" outside of meeting the other day. He said: "No, I shall never run for office again, not if I know it. For three weeks after I took the stump I did not see my family, and during my absence at that time a fellow who was shipping watermelons for me pocketed the returns for four carloads and skipped the country; a tramp rode away on one of my best horses; my wife invested \$200 in bicycles; my youngest daughter ran away and married a fellow for me to support, and all of our mutual relatives came to congratulate my wife on the honor which had been conferred upon me and incidentally to spend the summer. Those three weeks cost me in round numbers \$400, to say nothing of the son-in-law, who threatened to be permanent, and the office for which I was striving is worth just \$600 a year. I won't be elected, however, and I'm — glad of it. But this has been a campaign of education to me, for in it I have learned just how much of a fool I really was."—Atlanta Constitution.

Trolley Conductors' Eyes.

Street railway men, who are inclined to ascribe all the ills from which they suffer to the introduction of electricity as a motive power on the car lines, have discovered new grounds for complaint about the hardships of the lives they lead. A conductor of the Columbia avenue line put the case in a nutshell the other night when he said: "Railroadin ain't the softest job there is in the world. When I commenced, 12 years ago, I was stronger'n Sandow, an now it's as much as I can do to carry a fistful of nickels. My sight's beginnin to fail me now, an it's all on account of these here electric lights, for they've knocked out lots of the boys already. Every time we cross a current 'breaker' the light flashes, an what with the constant jarrin it makes my head ache all the time. I'd rather work under a tallow candle or a calcium light—anything, so long's it's steady. I'll soon have to wearin glasses like the most of 'em. Thirty-two out of the 58 regulars an subs on this division wears glasses already."—Philadelphia Record.

Paid Too Much For the Baby.

Caleb has three children—John, Mary and Jane. John is the eldest and so the most inquiring. He had heard that babies were bought from doctors, and one day asked his mother about prices.

"Mother, how much did I cost?" he inquired.

As some reply had to be made, his mother said \$1,000. John thought it over for a moment, and then asked: "How much did you pay for Mary?"

"Fifteen hundred dollars."

"Why, she cost more than me."

"Yes, girls always cost more than boys."

"What did you pay for Jane?" Jane is a little self-willed tyrant.

"Jane cost \$2,000," said Mrs. Caleb, and John lapsed into deep thought.

In a few moments he said, "Mamma, I don't think Mary cost too much, but you got stuck with Jane."—New York Times.

A Unique Republic.

The republic of Goust is the smallest in the world. Andorra is an empire in comparison. Goust is about a mile square, and it houses 130 persons. It has been independent these 250 years. It stands on top of a mountain by the Spanish border, near the edge of France, and it gets along very comfortably without ever mixing itself in other people's affairs, and without reading the evening papers, or, so far as we know, the morning ones. The delectable 130 govern themselves by a council, one member of which is selected to see that the business agreed upon is executed. Matters go along very smoothly, and Goustians are all the happier because nobody knows much about them, and therefore they are unenvied.—Kansas City Times.

A Welsh Dinner.

A new terror is in store for epicures—namely, the Welsh menu. The South Wales Daily News recently printed the following specimen:

Frys. Gleastid. Saws Hufen a Chwraeswrn Gwrybyng. Dantethion. Tamedion yr Ymerodres a Thesauon Oen. Dryllan. Assauu Yngig a March ruddygi. Marddwyd o Foddyg Etrwg a Hoes o Wia. Frys Gleision. Pelen Pul. Teisauu Ffrangig. Glyngoled Metus. Pelen Ia. Caws. Probably after the diner has finished with "caws" he begins to feel the effect

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