

The Pigeon-Post at Sea and in War.

By Adrien De Jassaud, of Paris.

In France, during the siege of Paris, at a time when the German armies were surrounding the capital and cutting off the Parisian population from all communication with the outside world, Monsieur Rampont, the then Postmaster-General, conceived the idea of intrusting to pigeons the transmission of news, thus giving the inhabitants a knowledge of what was going on in the provinces. In this way those members of

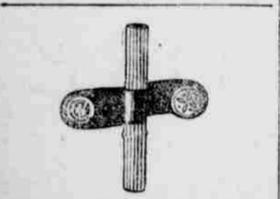


The Government who had remained in Paris were put in touch with their colleagues of the National Defense who were at Tours. In order to attain this subject a certain number of pigeons were conveyed by balloon from Paris to Tours, whence they were set free, bearing messages photographically reduced to microscopic dimensions on very light collodion films. In those days the despatch was rolled up and inclosed in a quill attached to the tail of the pigeon. By these means over 150,000 official and, at the lowest, 1,000,000 private messages entered Paris.

The great French shipping company known as the Compagnie Transatlantique deserves the credit of making the first attempts to establish what may truly be styled the seapost.

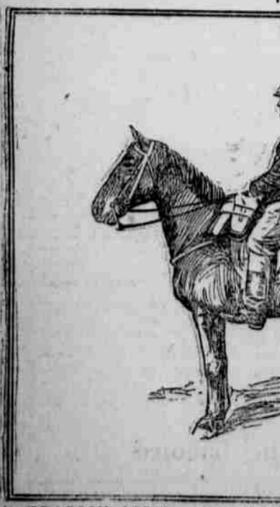
On March 26, 1898, the steamship La Champagne took aboard, for the first time, eighty pigeons. Three batches of birds were set free at a short distance from the seaboard, and this in most stormy weather. The older birds safely reached their cote, while the younger ones, unable to withstand a pelting rain-fall, dropped into the sea in sight of those aboard.

On the following day, and under like unfavorable weather conditions, La Champagne, having covered 300 miles, rescued the crew of the doomed Bothnia. Seven pigeons were sent



forth, each bearing a similar despatch. They took their flight at noon, and it was calculated that they should either reach land or some ship's mast. One of the birds dropped on the deck of the Chatterton, in the Bay of Biscay; the Chatterton cabled to Paris and to New York the loss of the Bothnia. A second bird was picked up by a freight steamer, which thereupon shaped its course for the locality of the disaster, came across the derelict, and towed it into an Irish port. A week later a third pigeon, wounded, and minus its despatch, reached its cote. The four others were never heard of again.

The pigeons employed by the Compagnie Transatlantique are selected



A DRAGOON SCOUT—HE CARRIES ON HIS BACK A SUPPLY OF PIGEON MESSENGERS.

with the most rigorous care. The head must be big and round; the bill relatively short and surrounded with a fleshy, heart-shaped excrescence; the eyes shine brightly; the breast must

bunch out; the legs be short; and the wings must meet on a narrow and powerful tail.

In addition to being endowed with an extraordinary instinct for shaping its course, a good carrier pigeon must possess great rapidity of flight and tremendous staying power. The first-named quality—the "homing instinct," which is innate—is not susceptible of any improvement. The two others may be secured by means of progressive and regular training. A pigeon's education begins when it is but three or four months old. It is conveyed a mile distant from its cote and then set free. The experiment is renewed daily, the distance on each occasion being imperceptibly increased. The bird's education cannot be considered complete, however, until it has attained the age of three years.

On land the pigeon is able to cover long distances, such as those between Rouen and Brussels or New York and Chicago. Its ratio of flight, under normal atmospheric conditions, is never less than 31,358.50 miles an hour, and never exceeds 49,853.90 miles on a long distance.

The pigeons are brought aboard the Transatlantic steamers in wicker cages having a drinking trough. As soon as the French coast is out of sight passengers desirous of sending a dispatch are notified to prepare it. In pursuance of this object the passenger is handed a small rectangular card on which he is to write as legibly as possible what he wishes to communicate, plus the name and address of the receiver; the card is then handed to the clerk intrusted with the transmission of the message. The clerk puts the different messages into a group, photographs them on a plaque to which adheres a film, reducing the writing in the course of the operation to such a



THIS PIGEON IS WEARING THE CHINESE WHISTLE WHICH PROTECTS IT AGAINST THE ENEMY'S TRAINED HAWKS.

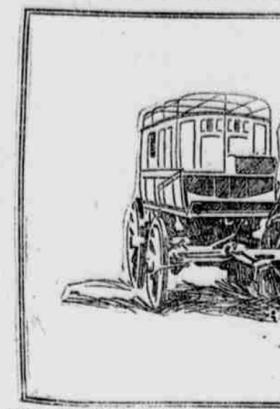
degree that it cannot be deciphered except with the aid of a magnifying glass. The proof is developed, the film detached and carefully rolled, and then placed in a small bamboo tube, hermetically sealed, and weighing hardly one and one-half grammes. To this tube is attached a light kid band, provided with an automatic button such as is sometimes used to fasten gloves.

As soon as the tubes are ready the pigeons are taken out of the baskets containing them. These birds are extremely delicate—the slightest crushing injures them and renders them unfit to do what is expected of them. The clerk attaches each tube to the leg of a pigeon by buttoning the kid band above described. A pigeon is able to carry a weight of fifteen grammes without its detracting from the rapidity of its flight.

The lossings take place in the morning, or, if the skies are too overcast, at latest before 2 p. m. Immediately upon being loosened the pigeons circle a few times about the ship, after which they head straight for France, in the direction of Rennes. On arrival at the home station the tubes are taken off, the films extracted from them, and the photographic dispatches enlarged to their original size. The proofs thus obtained are pasted on a glazed card ornamented with a pretty allegorical design.

steers its course as if guided by a compass. As the pigeon flies at an altitude of not more than 100 yards to 150 yards it is not aided by its vision, for in that case, given the rotundity of the world, it would have to soar to an altitude of 7070 yards. Now, according to aeronauts who have experimented in the matter, the bird at that altitude quickly drops to a much lower one. Are they then guided by magnetic currents? Are they endowed with a sixth sense? The matter remains a mystery.

It is impossible for the pigeon carried away by a steamship to note the course followed by means of one of his five senses, since, during his journey by rail from Rennes to Havre, as well as during the one by sea, he has been altogether cut off from the outer world. And yet the bird possesses so accurate a knowledge of the road it has traveled that it makes for its cote without the slightest hesitancy and at a very normal rapidity of flight. The carrier pigeon was of necessity

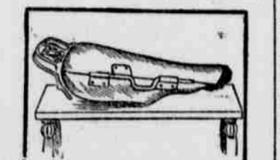


TWO OF THE PIGEON-CAGE WAGONS USED IN THE FRENCH ARMY.

to be made use of for national defense. During a campaign the success of operations depends at most times on the rapidity with which the commander-in-chief is informed of the enemy's movements. To this end use is made of cavalry patrols and of the field telegraph and telephone. But to insure the safe arrival of information none of these means is so reliable as the carrier pigeon. Scouts are liable to be made prisoners or killed, telegraph or telephone wires may work faultily or be destroyed. These mishaps are avoided by the use of the carrier pigeon.

In war time the role of cavalry consists more especially in seeing and in reporting what it has seen. It is often an easy matter to see, but to report oftentimes attended by difficulties.

Herein lies the value of the carrier pigeon. Troops on the march are accompanied by portable cages. They consist of huge wire cages provided with lateral shutters; the cage is transported on a two-horse four-wheeled wagon. When it is found expedient to reconnoitre the position of the enemy or surprise its movements a few pigeons are taken out of the portable cage and placed in a wicker cage in shape like an infantry soldier's haversack; this cage is strapped on the back of a dragoon. Dragons are preferred for this service, for they do not carry



A CASE FOR A CARRIER-PIGEON.

any carbine slung about them, so that the cage is more easily attached to their back. The dragons gallop off in the direction ordered, and before coming in touch with the enemy they commit to a very thin sheet of paper the result of their observations. The sheet is then inserted in a tube, and a little while after loosing the pigeon the officer at headquarters is in a position to read the dispatch.

In order to fight the carrier pigeons, to stop them in their flight and intercept the information borne by them, the Germans have trained hawks to hunt down these winged messengers. The undertaking was at first attended with difficulties, for, independently of the necessity of establishing on a large scale a system of falconry, the same dispatch might be intrusted to several pigeons, and hence it would be sufficient for a single one to escape from the talons of the birds of prey to render useless all efforts made to capture the dispatch. Moreover, the pigeons are protected from the assault of the hawk by means of a little Aeolian or Chinese whistle affixed to its tail. This whistle sounds as the bird flies through the air, and frightens away the timid hawk.

In Germany much importance is attached to the use of carrier pigeons in time of war, and in the German Army the greatest care is devoted to the training of the birds, the officers and men being given instruction in the art of handling them. In France the scouts are provided with a pigeon apiece, which they carry in a little iron case fastened to the waistbelt. The holder has a hinged lid, which is opened when the bird is to be released, and the head piece can be unfastened when the bird is fed.

In France carrier pigeons are like horses—liable to be requisitioned in time of war. Every year owners of carrier pigeons are compelled to state in the Mayor's office the number of

birds they own; white foreigners are no longer permitted to breed carrier pigeons in the country.

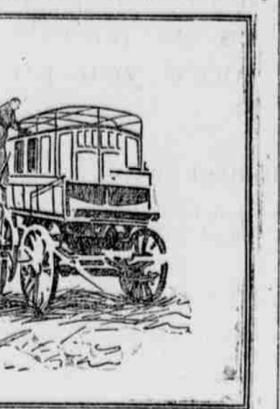
There are at present in Paris some 700 owners of carrier pigeons, possessing 14,000 pigeons, 7500 of which are subjected to a regular course of training. The total number of carrier pigeons in France is 600,000.

The price of a pigeon varies according to its pedigree, age and degree of training. Some few years ago, at a sale in England, seventy pigeons fetched \$3440. One of the birds, a cross between the Antwerp and Brussels breed, brought \$245.—The Wide World Magazine.

THE AUSTRALIAN FLAG.

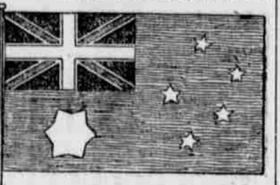
A Selection Made From the Thirty Thousand Designs Submitted.

The judges appointed by the Government of the Australian Commonwealth have made their selection from the thirty thousand designs submitted in the recent competition open to Australian artists and others. The flag



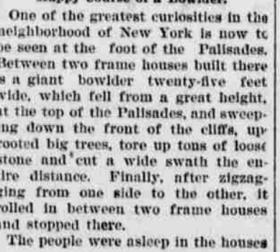
decided upon has the Union Jack in the top left hand corner, with a six pointed star immediately beneath it, emblematic of the six federated States, while the other half of the flag is devoted to depicting the Southern Cross. The Government and official color is to be blue, while the mercantile marine of the new commonwealth will fly the flag with a red ground. The

approved design was submitted by several competitors.—New York Tribune.



Happy Course of a Boulder.

One of the greatest curiosities in the neighborhood of New York is now to be seen at the foot of the Palisades. Between two frame houses built there is a giant boulder twenty-five feet wide, which fell from a great height, at the top of the Palisades, and sweeping down the front of the cliffs, up rooted big trees, tore up tons of loose stone and cut a wide swath the entire distance. Finally, after zigzagging from one side to the other, it rolled in between two frame houses and stopped there.



The people were asleep in the houses



when the rock started. They had barely time to make their escape when it made its appearance at their front door. They are now thanking their lucky stars that the enormous stone did not hit one of the buildings.—New York Herald.

Aerolite Buys a Barn.

It is reported from Kieff that a large aerolite fell in the village of Wisienki, a few miles from Kieff, the noise of its fall being heard for a distance of fifteen miles.

According to a Warsaw dispatch (October 18) in the London Express, the aerolite crashed through a barn, setting it on fire, and within half an hour fourteen peasants' houses were in flames. A boy, three years old, was burned to a cinder in one of the dwellings.

THE BAD BOY'S BRAVERY.

I ain't afraid of hikin's
And I ain't afraid to stay
Away from school sometimes
When no one says I may;
I ain't afraid to jump
On cars that's running fast,
I ain't afraid of horses,
And I bet you that I just
Throw pabbies at the grocery boy
When he goes drivin' past;
I ain't afraid of grandpas
And I ain't afraid of pa;
I ain't afraid of nothing
A body ever saw.
And once I shot a pistol
And nearly hit the mark—
But I wish folks needn't ever
Go to bed up where it's dark.
—Chicago Record-Herald.

HUMOROUS.

"Does the course of their true love run smooth?" "Oh, yes; there are banks on both sides."

"I thought he threatened to commit suicide." "He did try it, but the pistol missed fire." "Ah! and so did he."

Mrs. Muggins—Mrs. Talkatol believes everything she hears. Mrs. Buggins—Yes, and a lot she doesn't hear.

Hook—Henpeckke says he was married in leap year. Nye—Poor Henpeckke! He never could learn to say no.

Nell—Mrs. Newlywed says she has perfect confidence in her husband." Belle—Yes; she even gives him her letters to mail.

Hoax—There goes a fellow who believes in taking things as they come. Joax—A philosopher, eh? Hoax—No; a photographer.

The air ship chucked, as innaminate things sometimes do, "I may be a failure," it remarked, "but I can truthfully say there are no flies on me."

"Before a man marries a girl," says the Mannyunk Philosopher, "he talks about her great strength of character. After they are married he calls it stubbornness."

"Good morning!" said the would-be contributor; "how would you like to have an essay on 'Our Daily Bread?'" "Thanks," replied the editor; "we prefer butter." Good-day.

"Benny Bloobumper, how do we know that the moon is 240,000 miles distant from the earth?" Benny (alarmed at the teacher's manner) replied: "Y-y-you said so yourself, sir."

Nell—Why did she break off the engagement? Belle—Just because of a remark he made to her. He said: "Let us enjoy life while we may, for we shall probably be a long time married."

"Some say he is generous, and some says he's not." "Perhaps both are right." "Well, for my part, I never knew him to keep his promises." "That's just it. He'll give a promise, and then magnanimously forget his generosity."

"You are not singing that beautiful song, 'I Want to Be an Angel,' with the rest of us," said the teacher. The little one shook her head. "What's the use of telling a story about it?" she demanded. "I'm having enough trouble learning to play the piano without bothering with a harp."

LOSS OF NAVAL VESSELS.

America Has Been Especially Unfortunate in This Particular.

Twenty-five ships in twenty-five years means the loss of one ship a year. The British navy, which is about five times the size of the United States navy, and which has been more often during the past twenty-five years ten times the size of our navy, has, during that period, lost two vessels, and this is probably as heavy a loss as has been suffered by any of the large navies of the world. What makes the matter more serious is that these mishaps appear to be increasing.

It will not do to say, as one Congressman did, that the navy has been recently operating in unknown seas. No seas on the globe ought to be unknown to an American naval officer who is old enough and sufficiently experienced to command a ship. Such a plea would be laughed at by any naval officer in Europe, and it is safe to say, by any American naval officer—for the latter is fully the equal in every particular to the former. It is probably the fault of the system, and not chargeable to individual incompetence.

It is, nevertheless, a matter which should be carefully investigated by Congress. If it be the fault of a system, Congress can take it for granted that the system will never be altered in any other way than by legislation. No department of the government is so securely in the clutches of red tape as the navy, nor service so completely bound hand and foot by foolish and mischievous tradition.—Baltimore American.

Bandages and Red Tape.

During the South African war Rudyard Kipling discovered at Cape Town a hospital without bandages and in desperate need of them. This, too, was in a city where bandages were for sale in many shops.

He told an acquaintance that he was going to meet that want, and the gentleman at once offered to pay for all the bandages that Mr. Kipling would buy and take to the hospital.

A cart was quickly loaded, and then the author was informed that under army rules the hospital authorities could not receive supplies from a private individual.

"Well," said he, "I will dump the packages on the pavement before the door, and then tell them to come out and clear up the litter. Perhaps they can get them into the building in that way without tearing any red tape."

He drove off with the bandages, and the supplies were somehow smuggled into the hospital.—Youth's Companion.

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J. R. HILLIS, Reynoldsville, Pa.

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CONDENSED TIME TABLE

IN EFFECT NOV. 3, 1901.

NORTH BOUND.						
EASTERN TIME.	4	6	8	11	2	
LEAVES:	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	P. M.	
Pittsburg	9:00				4:10	10:00
Allegheny		10:12		5:21		11:21
Butler			11:27	6:36		12:36
West Moogrove				7:51		1:51
Dayton				9:06		3:06
Punkislawney				10:21		4:21
Punkislawney				11:36		5:36
Big Run				12:51		6:51
C. & M. Junction				2:06		8:06
DuBois				3:21		9:21
Falls Creek				4:36		10:36
Brockwayville				5:51		11:51
Ridgway				7:06		1:06
Johnstown				8:21		2:21
ML Jewett				9:36		3:36
Newton				10:51		4:51
Bradford				12:06		6:06
LEAVES:	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.		
Buffalo	11:50	6:30			7:15	
Rochester		7:30			8:45	
Arrive:	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.		
Butler		8:30			9:45	
Additional train leaves Butler for Punkislawney 7:30 A. M. daily, except Sundays.						

SOUTH BOUND.

EASTERN TIME.	13	9	3	5	7	
LEAVES:	A. M.	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	
Rochester				7:45		9:00
Butler				9:00		10:15
LEAVES:	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.		
Bradford	7:45	12:30	4:15	12:45		
Newton	8:59	1:44	5:29	2:00		
ML Jewett	10:13	2:58	6:43	3:14		
Johnstown	11:27	4:12	7:57	4:28		
Ridgway	12:41	5:26	9:11	5:42		
Brockwayville	1:55	6:40	10:25	6:56		
Falls Creek	3:09	7:54	11:39	8:10		
DuBois	4:23	9:08	12:53	9:24		
C. & M. Junction	5:37	10:22	2:07	10:38		
Big Run	6:51	11:36	3:21	11:52		
Punkislawney	8:05	12:50	4:35	1:06		
Punkislawney	9:19	2:04	5:49	2:20		
Dayton	10:33	3:18	7:03	3:34		
West Moogrove	11:47	4:32	8:17	4:48		
Craigsville	1:01	5:46	9:31	6:02		
Butler	2:15	7:00	10:45	7:16		
Allegheny	3:29	8:14	12:00	8:30		
Pittsburg	4:43	9:28	1:15	9:44		
Arrive:	A. M.	A. M.	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.	
Butler			10:30		11:45	
Additional train leaves Punkislawney for Butler 4:35 P. M. daily, except Sundays.						

CLEARFIELD DIVISION.

P. M.	75	73	EASTERN TIME.	70	72
Arrive:			LEAVES:		
8:30	1:00		Reynoldsville	8:20	
8:50	1:20		Falls Creek	9:35	
9:10	1:40		DuBois	10:50	
9:30	2:00		Johnstown	12:05	
9:50	2:20		Craigsville	1:20	
10:10	2:40		Butler	2:35	
10:30	3:00		Allegheny	3:50	
10:50	3:20		Pittsburg	5:05	
11:10	3:40		Arrive:		
P. M.	A. M.	Leave:	P. M.	P. M.	A. M.
8:30	1:00		8:20		
8:50	1:20		9:35		
9:10	1:40		10:50		
9:30	2:00		12:05		
9:50	2:20		1:20		
10:10	2:40		2:35		
10:30	3:00		3:50		
10:50	3:20		5:05		

* Daily. † Daily except Sunday.
 Trains 3 and 6 are solid vestibuled, with handsome day coaches, and reclining chair cars. Also cafe cars daily except Sunday.
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