

MESSENGERS OF WAR.

GREAT BRITAIN'S METHOD OF
SENDING NEWS.

Pigeon Post which is furnishing most of the information from Africa—Battleships are fitted out with posts—The distance these birds can fly.

Presumably the pigeons that are serving as post boys in the Transvaal just now arrived out on the warship Powerful, unless, which is not improbable, certain Britishers in Natal or Durban had established lots where homing birds were trained to the country. I am inclined to favor the former idea owing to the fact that a naval pigeon post has been for some time established and lots have been built at Devonport, Gosport, and Sheerness at a cost of about £1,000. A couple of years ago the Admiralty bought a large number of one-month-old birds and placed them in the Royal Navy lot at Gosport, intending to use them for the conveyance of messages from warships to shore, with a view of rendering them serviceable in time of war. There are over three hundred societies in England for the cultivation of homers, and many of the older birds have flown over seven hundred miles without shown signs of flagging.

A good pigeon will fly over sixty miles an hour. These times are kept with great care in Germany, and the apparatus for noting the time is most ingenious. The pigeon is taught to announce its arrival at its loft by knocking with its beak against the closet trapdoor of the dove-cote. This action sets in motion machinery which flings open the door, admits the bird, and at the same time rings a bell that hangs in the attendant's room. The greatest care and patience are necessary while training the birds. It might seem superfluous in these days of telephone, telegraph, and wireless telegraphy to go to the trouble of training birds to carry despatches, but the wisdom of the action is made manifest today, when the whole world centres about the message a pigeon may be carrying among his feathers as he wings over kopje and veldt on his way to his dove-cote on the waiting ship.

You may care to know the way the despatches are carried—in times of peace at least. The message, if it be a long one, is reduced from the original by photographic process, by which eight octavo pages of writing or printing may be reduced to a mere nothing. The little photograph is then rolled and placed within a quill which is introduced among the tail feathers of the pigeon and carefully bound there. The officer at the receiving station removes the despatch, and with the aid of the powerful oxy-hydrogen microscope magnifies the writing to more than its first dimensions.

This process can hardly be in force just now at Ladysmith, therefore the despatches are reduced to a few necessary words or lines to which the reporter or correspondent applies the microscope of his imagination and we get the story magnified to more than seven times its dimensions. The birds would fly direct from Ladysmith to the warships, where no doubt special provision has been made for them. There can be hardly any doubt that the marines brought the pigeons up with them when they went to re-inforce Gen. White, and released the birds would make for their dove-cote.

To Italy belongs the credit of having first reorganized the utility of training pigeons as messengers in war time, while now, nearly every European nation has its regiment of homers. These birds are better 'stayers' than the carrier pigeon proper, and some advance the theory that they are more intelligent and easier to train. Commander Tuinell is the great English authority on pigeons, and the training of birds in his hobby. For a long time this gentleman and a few officers trained birds at their own expense, and so successful were their experiments, that the Intelligence Department took hold of the matter officially with the result that it was proposed—and may possibly be an accomplished fact by this time—to fit out a number of the armed cruisers with pigeon cote.

The loft at Devonport is built so high that birds can see it when a long way out at sea. The cotes, which were planned by Commander Tuinell, are cleverly constructed. The birds have general living and sleeping quarters, with 'cells' provided where birds of a doubtful character are held over till their special sins are found out. Each cote has its hospital, where the sick post boys are carefully attended to. The officers at the stations are very earnest in their efforts to train the birds to long distance flying, and they apparently have met with great success. As long ago as 1896 racing birds who were flown at Thurso in Scotland reached their English homes a distance of 600 miles in a single day the fastest bird travelling at the speed of 1,400 yards a minute. I do not know the distance between Ladysmith and Durban but roughly guessing it from a close

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study of the map, it appears to be something less than 200 miles. If the pigeons on board the Powerful—always supposing the ship came out equipped with a pigeon post—are worth their grain, they would be able to make the journey from Ladysmith to their post in three hours and a half. German military pigeons have the following records to their credit: Eighty-three miles in 1 hour 32 minutes 30 seconds. Four hundred and fifty miles in 6 hours and 13 minutes.

Joe Jefferson's Family of Actors.

Joseph Jefferson, the actor, only plays fourteen weeks during the year. His fall season of eight weeks is now in progress, and when that shall have ended he will rest until spring, when he will play another season of six weeks. In the interim his sons, Thomas B., Joseph, jr., and William, go on the road as members of the Jefferson Comedy Company, playing the parts their father made famous. The part of Rip is taken by Thomas, whose likeness is presented herewith. Charles B. plays Vedder; Joseph, jr., Garrick, and William takes the role of Cocksles.

During their fathers season the boys take part in his financial and stage management. The two companies are quite distinct and the public are not imposed upon by the youthful actors. Indeed, in the contrary, their performance in many respects is said to be equal to that of their father.

For several years past Thomas, who is a

capable and well-trained actor, has been in his fathers company as stage manager. Once the old gentleman did not feel equal to playing a one night stand in Canton, Ohio, so he deputized his son to play 'Rip' in his place. The bill did not record the change, and therefore the young man received the full measure of applause that his father always gets. After the performance he went to the leading hotel and bought the finest cigar he could find, and as he smoked he soliloquized after this fashion:

'Well' said he to himself, 'I guess I am something of an actor after all. I rather flatter myself the old man couldn't have done better tonight than I did.'

While he was thus pleasantly musing a native stepped up the cigar stand.

'See the show?' asked the clerk.

'Yes.'

'What did you think of it?'

'First rate, all except 'Rip.' Seems to me the old man's falling.'

At this point the actor's cigar went out and his sleep that night was not of the soundest. But that was years ago, and since then he has learned many things, among them how to act.

Willingly Paid.

On a journey from Vienna to St. Petersburg, Mr. Stuart Cumberland the well-known anti-spiritualist and thought reader, entertained his fellow-passengers by guessing their thoughts. One of the travellers a Polish Jew, who took the whole thing for a hoax, offered to pay Mr. Cumberland the sum of fifty roubles if he could divine his thoughts. Visibly amused, Mr. Cumberland acceded to his request, and said—

'You are going to the fair at Nizhni Novgorod, where you intend to purchase goods to the extent of 20,000 roubles, after which you will declare yourself a bankrupt, and compound with your creditors for 3 per cent.'

On hearing these words, the Jew gazed at the speaker with reverential awe. He then, without uttering a syllable, drew out of the leg of his boot a shabby purse and handed him the promised fifty roubles.

Whereupon the magician triumphantly inquired—

'Then I have guessed your thoughts, eh?'

'No,' replied the Jew; 'but you have given me a brilliant idea.'

A New Use for Ponies.

General Miles has a keen sense of the humorous even in the excitement of war. When he first landed in Porto Rico at the head of his invading army he was welcomed by nearly all classes. Among his visitors was an elderly native who had never traveled and who never tired of decanting upon the giant size of the Americans and their horses. He compared a sixteen-hands-high charger with a

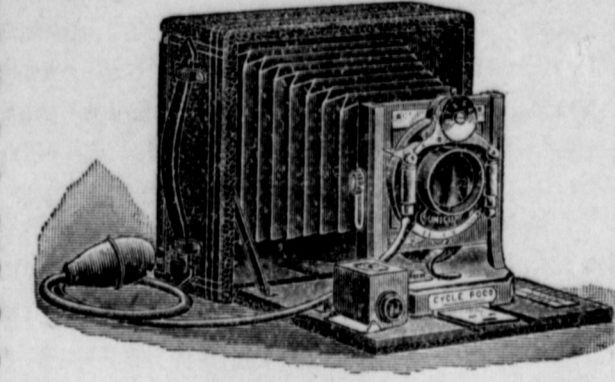
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diminutive Porto Rican steed, and asked the General what was done with the latter in the United States. The Commander replied very solemnly: 'We use them to pull baby-carriages with.'

Some Ready-Made Law.

Honorable Bourke Cockran studied law under Judge Theodore L. Dwight. One day the Professor asked a question which seemed easy but way really difficult. With his magnificent voice Cockran answered the best he could, adding as a saving clause, 'Such, I take it, is the common law.' The good old Doctor gleamed benignantly through his spectacles. 'That

would be all right, sir, if you had made it uncommon law.'

The Yuletide Number.

The December number of the Delineator is called the Yuletide number. And with its innumerable illustrations is certainly one of the most artistic magazines ever seen out. Aside from being the leading fashion publication, it contains much choice literary matter from the pens of well known authors. The household and social discussions are ably dealt with and are of real worth. The delightful humorous fantasia Over the Plum Pudding, by John Kendrick Bangs, is thoroughly witty and enjoyable. There is an admirably illustrated article on the Dewey Celebration in New York. An interesting story, The Poppy Lady, by Cornelia Atwood Pratt, disposes of the impression that the union of artistic temperaments is hostile to domestic happiness. Fidele, by Helen Choate Prince, is a dainty sketch of the implicit devotion animal pets have for masters and friends. A Christmas poem, The Legend of the Yule fire, by Edith M. Thomas, is an impressive effort in a somewhat lighter strain are the verses, Kisses Kept are Wasted, by Edmund Vance Cooke. A timely and suggestive article is Some Women's Occupations, by Lafayette McLaws. Concluding the series The Great Scourges of Humanity, by Grace Peckham Murray, M. D. is a valuable paper on Cerebral Disorders. In College News Carolyn Halstead gives an interesting analysis of the inspiration and strength of college friendships. In the department Club Women and Club Life, Helen M. Winslow writes charmingly of the Women's Clubs of Kansas. A very clever and instructive article by Emma Haywood gives directions for making Christmas gifts. Of particular interest are the Household topics: Inexpensive Christmas gifts, and some Holiday Desserts. In addition, the regular departments are unusually bright and original. Social Observances, by Mrs. Frank Learned: The Milliner, The Dress-maker, Crocheting, Tatting, Knitting, the Newest Books, etc.

Subscription price of The Delineator, \$3.00 a year, single copies, 15 cents.

A Real Pessimist.

Laurence Gronlund, the famous socialistic writer who died a few weeks ago in New York, was that rare thing, a thorough pessimist. His favorite quotations were Schopenhauer's sentiments of despair and Heine's more cynical lines. One evening, after he had denounced the modern industrial system in savage terms, a friend remarked:

'It is not so bad as Russian despotism, is it?'

'Not quite. The former is the worst possible; the latter the worst conceivable.'

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