

Training, Singly or in Flocks.

Editor Review,

I have read in your last issue the communication of "I. R. K." on the subject of letting birds loose all together in a fly, and I don't agree with him on this subject.

As you know I am a Belgian by birth, and have been many years in the flying fancy in the city of Antwerp, the most renowned city of that country for homing birds, and I may say, that there is no other way there, generally speaking, even from the first trainings either with old or young birds, than to let them loose all together. It would be an impossibility for fanciers that have a flock of birds to get them tossed separately, and experience has taught that it makes no difference whatever. Good birds will distinguish themselves either way.

Your correspondent says that if twelve larks belonging to one coop, are trained and let loose always together, a fancier will expose himself to loose more than when two or three birds are liberated together. I cannot see the justice of this argument, and I think that twelve birds, that are in the habit of flying together at home, will return with the same if not greater facility than if but two or three of their number were liberated.

The fact is that no matter in what way birds are set free, and no matter in how short stages they are trained, by coming at a certain distance, the good birds will come back and the poor ones will stay away.

The only necessity I can see to let birds loose separately, is in a race of a few birds on a short voyage, as by letting them go together they are in the habit to come home at a distance of a few miles in a flock.

In the last national race in the city of Brussels, from the city of Lamathe, in the South of France, about 550 miles distance, 3,630 birds participated. How would it do to fly two at a time, with an interval of half an hour between each tossing?

JOHN VAN OPSTAL.

New York, Aug. 9th. 1880.

We had the pleasure last month of liberating in Strathroy the Homing Antwerp cock, "Wild Rover," owned by Mr. Chas. Ayre, of St. Catharines. Through a misunderstanding the bird was tossed a day earlier than Mr. Ayre intended, and the consequence was, not being expected so soon, he entered his coop unnoticed. He was liberated at 8:15 a.m., weather all that could be desired, and was found in his coop at 9:10 o'clock the following morning. The distance flown is about 120 miles air-line.

The St. Catharines Homing Antwerp Club purpose at an early date getting up a flying match for young birds, open to all comers.

Strasbourg Geese.

When the Prussians annexed Strasbourg they gained something more than a city of 80,000 inhabitants, a first-rate cathedral, and that unique steeple clock where a cock crows over the heads of twelve apostles, a skeleton, and a pagan divinity every day at noon. They acquired some 150,000 French geese who every year waddled solemnly into the city through the seven castellated doors, and, like patriotic fowls as they were, offered up their lives on the alters of their country's greatness. It was no slight present. These livers, cased with Perigord truffle inside block tins or terracotta pots from Saraghemines, were scattered over the wide world as *pates de foie gras*, causing the name of France to be blessed by all natives and foreigners who had a taste for good things. Nor can it be contended that Strasbourg derived less than half her fame from the sales of these pies. The French, who deal with history as it suits them, contend that *pate de foie gras* was well known to the Romans, for that those sacred geese who were nourished in the Capitol, and who warned Manlius, were nothing but geese kept at high diet, like those of Strasbourg, that their livers might be enlarged. Without disputing that statement, one may say that it is only in very recent times that the process of preparing geese for the pie market has been brought to perfection. If the Roman augurs dealt in goose liver, they must have had recourse to those barbarous iron coops wherein the bird was kept imprisoned all but its neck, which protruded through an aperture and could not be withdrawn. A lively fire was kept up in the neighborhood of the coops, and the goose got on as he could with three meals a day till the time arrived for killing him. But this system was discarded some thirty years ago, because it was cruel—not to the goose, but to his owner, who generally saw four birds out of five die prematurely of exhaustion. Suppose we enter one of the most famous foie-gras factories in the retired street of Strasbourg, we shall see how these worn out methods have been superseded by modern improvements. A cool yard greets us, and a bland Frenchman, who has become Germanized, like his geese, by the force of circumstances, points to some hundred feathered bipeds huddled together in a corner and hissing a chorus with despairing energy. In former days they would have been singing *Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*; but now it is evident they are indulging in a dirge over the customs duties which they will be obliged to pay before being allowed to reach the breakfast-tables of their own people. Their proprietor explains that they are all nine months old, and have cost him lean as they are, about two franks fifty centimes a piece; he then makes a sign to half