

TIGER FISH caught on the Blue Nile below the Sennar Dam.



RECORD TIGER FISH

SIR.—In reply to your correspondent, C. H. Wickham, in *The Field* of March 21st, I would say that on the Blue Nile, below the Sennar Dam, very much larger tiger fish were not infrequently caught. The picture (above, left) shows three taken, I think, in the winter of 1930. Whether my friend Mr. McBain, of the Sudan Forestry Service, caught them all or whether I caught one of them I cannot remember. The centre fish weighed 29lb. and was only 22in. in length, and those on each side were 27lb. each. The other photograph shows the forepart of the 29-pounder (above, right). A few days later, a 34-pounder was taken. I forget who took it, but within a short time—in fact, I think within 10 days, a fish of 38lb. was taken. Which of these two fish was taken by the Duchess of Westminster I do not know. The late Duke was then staying at Sennar on a fishing holiday. I think I got a 34-pounder.

Before the war, there used to be a tiger fish of quite modest dimensions in Messrs. Hardy's shop in Pall Mall. I remember remarking that this looked to me a very poor specimen compared to those caught in the Blue Nile. Your correspondents must remember that there are three species or sub-species of the tiger fish; I think I got this information from Buolanger's book on *Fishes of the Nile*, and the long thin fish is called *fascallii*. This never grows to anything like the size of the other ones, and I imagine is the common tiger fish of the Zambesi, where a big fish weighs 7lb.—or so I am told.

As to your second correspondent "Tsage," I would point out that, although the dentition of the tiger fish is extremely formidable, there is no comparison whatever to the terrible mouth of the barracouta, for the latter has a bite that will remove the flesh of a human thigh right down to the bone, and one has only to

place a piece of line between the spear-shaped teeth to realise their razor sharpness. It is interesting that on watching tiger fish from a height they will frequently be seen to rush at surface-feeding fish, bite them, leave them dead or paralysed and then return at their leisure and swallow them. This is rather reminiscent of the sword fish when it strikes trolled bait and returns to gorge it. I have seen the barracouta do the same thing, bite a fish, taking a huge chunk out of it and return to savage it.

Many years ago I was speaking to a doctor who had worked in the Congo and he assured me that in that river there were tiger fish of 100lb., but since he did not seem to be well acquainted with such a striking fish as Nile perch, I would not like to lay very much emphasis on his remarks. Still, it would be interesting if any of your readers could confirm the presence of these enormous fish.

J. BRYANT

Carlisle, Lanarkshire.

THE NUTHATCH

SIR.—There is a bird in the garden which makes a noise very like the time-signal pips on the wireless. I still have not seen it. Normally it makes four pips and it is often in the trees where the jackdaws live. Have you any idea what bird it might be?

In the snow a brown owl sat on our kitchen window for several minutes eating pieces of fat—this was in the day-time and I imagine unusual.

GEORGE EARLE

Baggrave, Leicestershire.

(The call resembling the radio time-signal could be that of a nuthatch, its presence in a tree where jackdaws live supports this view. The owl in daylight was unusual but not rare.—ED.)

RHINO ON TWO LEGS

SIR.—Your correspondent Major Foran will, I think, be interested to hear that one European, at least, has actually seen a rhinoceros standing up on its hind legs to browse off the higher branches of a tree [*The Field*, February 23rd, 1956].

In a letter, dated July 20th, 1956, which the late Colonel J. C. M. Balders kindly wrote me, he said: "I was with the 4th King's African Rifles in Uganda from 1923 to 1928 and spent a fair time up on the North-East frontier, in Karamoja, where Uganda, Kenya, the Sudan, and Abyssinia more or less meet. I think it was in 1925 that I was on one of my usual safaris along the top of the Karamoja escarpment when I came on two rhinos, and one was up on his hind legs with his forefeet on the low boughs of a tree, eating the leaves. He appeared to be almost at full stretch. I was well ahead of my porters with only my King's African Rifles orderly—one, Ochen Vungum, an Acholi from Umia Pakuli, on the Karamoja-Acholi boundary. Ochen was a very intelligent man and his knowledge of wild life profound. He said he had not seen a rhino do that before. We watched for five or ten minutes and then let the porters catch up with us and circled round the rhinos downwind."

GEORGE CAMPBELL

Redbrook-on-Wye, Monmouthshire.

PRICE OF BEER

SIR.—May I assure Mr. R. E. Clewett [*The Field*, March 28th] that hops today are as good as ever they were, if not better, and that on average six of them are used in brewing a pint of beer, together with a quarter pint of barley malt?

His mention of a "mug o' thick," costing a penny, illustrates the severity of the beer tax. This is now nearly 50 times as heavy as it was in the days he refers to, and amounts on average to 8½d. a pint.

Some other foods are subsidised. Beer alone among foods is taxed. Community centres are provided at public expense. The "local"—the oldest and most natural social centre of our people—is exploited by the State as a revenue-collecting centre.

F. A. CHARLIER

London, W.1.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

SIR.—Through the auspices of *The Field* I have received this letter from Mrs. Petry, of Quebec. It is certainly wonderful to think that there is someone alive today who has heard of the Battle of Waterloo by word of mouth from an old pensioner who took part in that historic engagement.

JACK GILBEY, Captain

Glan Avon, Harlow, Essex.

DEAR CAPTAIN GILBEY.—Seeing in the short *Who's Who* of the Christmas number of *The Field* that you served in the Welch Regiment I venture to send you something about that Regiment which may be of mild interest to you.

My husband's grandfather as a young

ensign fought in Holland under Sir Thomas Graham and at the Battle of Waterloo, though only 19, commanded a company.

He was in the 69th Regiment, the "Ups and Downs"—the uniform he wore hangs before me as I write. In 1915 the Duke of Connaught, then Governor General of Canada, was in residence at the Citadel, Quebec.

On the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo my husband, who for many years was secretary of the Garrison Club here, dressed up one of the bell-boys in the uniform—medals and all.

The Duke of Connaught happened to be on the gallery of the Club and was told what the boy was wearing.

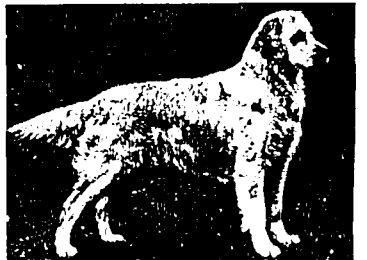
He saw my husband standing by and asked him what Regiment his grandfather was in. "I said, 'The 69th, Sir. Afterwards incorporated with the Welch Regiment.' His Royal Highness said: 'I think the 69th became the Welch Fusiliers.' I naturally did not contradict him, but the following day his Military Aide came to the Club and told me that the Duke had sent him to say that he had made a mistake—it was the Welch Regiment, and the Aide added that His Royal Highness had a wonderful memory concerning the British Army of which he was Commander-in-Chief, and this was the first time he had ever known him to make a mistake."

My husband, now in his 89th year and also suffering from *anno Domini*, thinks that he is the only man alive who has heard of the Battle of Waterloo by word of mouth.

ELIZABETH PETRY

A CHAMPION RETRIEVER

SIR.—This is a photograph (below) of my golden retriever, Champion Boltby Skyline, now the winner of 23 certificates. I send it to you because in the caption to a picture in *The Field* of February 7th Skyline was described as belonging to "Mr. R. Henderson." I should like to



explain that I have not sold the dog, that it remains my property, and that in my opinion the earlier picture did not do him justice.

(Mrs.) R. HARRISON

Boltby Kennels, Leeming Bar, Northallerton.

(Having seen the second picture, neither do we. The first picture, and its caption material, were supplied by an agency.—ED.)

EXTRACTS FROM OTHER LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Witchcraft.—I have just read the article on witchcraft in *The Field* of December 27th. When I was a curate in Norfolk at the turn of the century a farmer, referring to the unthrifty condition of his pigs, remarked: "They must have been overlooked," i.e. by the evil eye. A vicar's wife told me of the recent death of a perfectly healthy baby in her village. The child had recently been visited by a neighbour who was suspect of the occult. On examination of the body a circular mark, phosphorescent in appearance, was found on the back or chest—I forget which—and it was interpreted by the superstitious villagers as proof of witchcraft.—AUSTIN C. MACKIE, Vernon, British Columbia.

Dog kennels.—In the ordinary smaller household, today, the old-fashioned dog kennel seems almost a thing of the past. Strolling through Swanage in Dorset the other day I came across a reminder of the Victorian watch dog. Just inside the stable gates of, what was then, a private house I noticed a dog kennel built into the stone wall of the house itself. At eye level carved into the stonework were the words "Beware of Dog, Chained Day. Loose Night."—N. W., Bournemouth.

Roe deer exhibition.—An exhibition of roe deer heads will be held at St. Hubert House, 53, Green Street, London, W.1,

from May 6th to 18th, 1957; admission will be free. The exhibition will be in two parts—one for heads obtained during the past two years, the other consisting of a selected collection of the best heads that have been shot, at any time, in the British Isles. Included in this section will be most of the heads that went to the Dusseldorf Exhibition. Those wishing to send a head to this exhibition should get in touch with the hon. secretary at the address below as soon as possible.—G. KENNETH WHITEHEAD, The Old House, Withnell Fold, Chorley, Lancashire.

Seaside donkeys.—Very soon the donkeys will be appearing on the sands of some of our seaside resorts, where they will give much pleasure to the children. It is often asked what becomes of them in winter. Some will be found grazing in the New Forest, some are boarded out with families where they are given special attention and ridden by children of the family, and others are placed with farmers and others who will provide grazing. The donkey is a hardy beast and does not need much attention, but now they are given care over feeding and grooming to fit them for the season.—W. L. JULYAN, Lieut.-Colonel, St. Dominic, Cornwall.

Plover and crocodiles.—In reply to Mr. Bryant's letter [*The Field*, March 21st]. I have a distinct memory of watching a bird pick the teeth on the lower jaw of a crocodile on one occasion. This was in 1928 on the Atbara River, near Khasm-el-Girba. The crocodile was sunning himself on a sand-bank with his jaws wide open and I watched the bird at work on his teeth for some minutes. I have no recollection now of whether or not the bird was a plover, and I cannot recall having seen a similar occurrence elsewhere during my time in the Sudan.—T. W. MORAN, Hoylake, Cheshire.

Tiger takes photograph.—I do not think that the sound that caused Major C. C. Wilson's tiger to twitch back its left ear was the actual click of the shutter [*The Field*, March 14th]. The many hundreds of self-taken flashlight photographs of animals seem to show that no animal's response even to a flash in the face is rapid enough to be recorded by the camera. On the other hand, that left ear does look as if the tiger had heard something. In the early days flashlight-traps were often operated from trip-line to shutter entirely mechanically, i.e. without electricity. Is it possible that Major Wilson's

apparatus gave some sort of premonitory sound like a grandfather's clock "clearing its throat" before striking.—E. O. SHEARBEARE, South Newington, Oxfordshire.

A hare sits tight.—In *The Field* of March 28th there was a letter from F. G. Dearlove called "A Hare Sits Tight." I used to know a man who could walk across a field where he knew there was a hare and, as he went past it, stoop quickly and pick it up. Have other readers seen this happen?—A. S. JOHNSON, Bourne-mouth.

Cruelty to animals.—On the subject of the infliction of cruelty to animals, for the pleasure of men, it is indeed surprising that, in these days of so-called civilisation, the habit is still blatantly practised, by many members of society, of eating living animals. These animals are extensively sold in thousands, packed and wrapped in the minimum of space, to be served up without any care for their feelings. It is indeed a sobering thought to place oneself in the position of a helpless cheese-mite.—P. H. G. DICKINSON, Solihull, Warwickshire.

Gundog tests.—The Guildford, Woking and Haslemere Canine Society will hold Gundog Working Tests at Oxenford Grange, Elstead, on April 28th.