

Season for Gymkhana and Other Odd Sports at the Country Clubs

NEW YORK, Nov. 2.—Together with the summons of the autumn to fox hunting, shooting and harvest home, comes the call to gymkhana. These are held in spring and summer at exceptional places, but are most frequent when the leaves are tinted and frost has nipped the pumpkin.

A gymkhana is really a lawn party made lively by odd races and queer contests. The foreign title is a veneer over many rural sports as old as the hills, for about the only ones that have no place in gymkhana are climbing a greased pole, and chasing a pig, likewise greased.

But if pigs are barred, their companions of the farm yard, the geese, are pressed into service. These geese are brought into the lists to win prizes by their speed and obedience to command.

A stretch of lawn is the race course—usually part of the club's polo field—for the feathered thoroughbreds and all similar competitors. The onlookers, ranged on chairs, coaches and automobiles, on the club veranda, have a fine sight of the games, and they cheer on the contestants with enthusiasm, for everyone knows the others and neighborhood rivalries are felt.

Now the geese, if not urged to excessive speed, is a tractable bird, and may be guided on the road that it should go with gentle tapplings of a long, light wand. In Germany one sees children driving flocks of geese with long whips, and it is the same wherever geese are farmed.

At gymkhana such races are for women only, but a man usually goes to the post with each entry to assist in the start. When all are lined up, the starter gives the word and the race is on.

The dignified steps of the geese and their hissed of temper form a contrast to the eagerness of their drivers, who must control their desire to whip and run for the goal, and follow the birds as sedately as Quakers at a meeting. A goose is guided by light taps from the wand, which must be played as deftly as a trout rod.

Young birds ride in pony races under different odd conditions at the gymkhana and a standard sport is for them to compete on donkeys, the prize to the first in, but in pony races the tortoise style usually prevails and the award is to the rider finishing last. The conditions forbid a rider stopping, but the pony may be walked all the way or even backed from start to finish.

To roll eggs for a certain distance without cracking the shell is another race that girls figure in, and some times they have rabbits or guinea pigs to drive instead of geese.

In nearly all the games there is a union of interest between a girl and a man. One of the prettiest is a scarf race, for to do well the contestants must have ponies of equal speed and they must ride them well. The ponies and their riders of colors wearing strips of bright ribbons make a pretty picture on the green. There are no handspins or grips on the scarfs, and the riders must not give up either end nor drop one during the race.

The girl holds on the scarf with her left hand and the reins with the right, while the man has to guide his pony with his right hand. It is not an easy thing to ride a race in couples, for even if the riders have but one single thought the ponies are usually at cross purposes. Generally the winning pair finish all alone and the lawn behind is strewn with bits of ribbon dropped by the others.

In another contest for two the woman's



THE WINNING GOOSE GOES HOME.

SCARF TEAM GOING NICELY.

THREADING THE NEEDLE RACE.

TAKING MANIKINS TO STARTING POST.

START OF GOOSE DRIVING.

knowledge of horsemanship is not under trial, yet her part is as difficult as the jockey's share. This is a thread and needle race.

The riders are placed far enough apart to prevent crowding and as they leave the post each carries a needle. A feminine partner awaits each rider at the other end of the field to thread the needle.

The ponies dash up, riders fall off and hand over the needles, and while all is tension and excitement, the girls must pass the thread through the little eyes of steel. Whoever rider returns first to the starting post with his needle properly threaded wins the race.

Alas for the overseas of women in sport! It has been found necessary at several country clubs to take precautions that needles already threaded shall not be handed to the men in these races.

The cigarette and umbrella race requires the jockey to leave the post smoking a cigarette and carrying a furled umbrella.

The umbrella must be opened and the rider finish holding it over his head, still smoking the same cigarette.

A variation is to have the cigarette lit by the feminine partner at the turn in the race, who must strike the match and have it ready, blow the wind high or low. Another contest that combines good riding and fun is the potato race, although polo balls, apples or even cabbages may be pressed into service.

The potatoes are placed at equal distances for each rider, four or six being in use. The horseman takes up a potato, returns and drops it into a pail or basket, and so on.

All the contestants begin at one time and the prize is for whoever does the steepest climb. Although at the tasks simultaneously, the methods differ, and this adds to the fun, for some will dash boldly to the potato furthest away, others begin with the one nearest at hand, and still others,



"GOING WELL IN HARNESS."

without rhyme or reason, will start their collecting in the middle of the bunch.

Another case of jollity is the popular egg and spoon race, which has also been taken up by the classes at riding schools. The riders traverse the course as fast as they may without spilling an egg from a spoon. To spill is to be disqualified.

A mankin race is always ludicrous, both from the parade to the turning post, with the grotesque stuffed men and the antics of the ponies, which always shy at a mankin. To the turning post the race is an ordinary one, but here each rider dismounts to lift his stuffed man. They are heavy as well as big, the mankins, and none too comfortable a partner to support on the saddle to the finish, yet this must be done to fulfill the requirements.

Tests of handiness for polo ponies around stakes or in chasing a ball are occasional events at the gymkhana, and very exciting.

A novelty recently at the Whippany River Country club was a Marathon race from Morris town.

The race was between different groups of contestants. The message was to be forwarded by relays on foot, on horseback, in a driven vehicle, and to end the act stage in automobiles. The villagers crowded the road to the club and enjoyed the quick passing of each message to the successive carriers as highly as the members on the lawn.

Sometimes a team of women will play a short game of polo against men to enliven the gymkhana, but this is not greatly encouraged. A point to point race of two or three miles, the lawn being the finishing post, is a frequent feature.

The riders have a certain field and go across country as the crow flies, over fences and brooks, in a mad rush for the club. They come trooping on the polo field, all

riding desperately, and no race could have a more thrilling ending. The appearance of racers from over the fence or hedge having the suddenness of a jack-in-the-box, and there is a scattering of whatever gymkhana game is in progress to give the jockeys the right-of-way.

The course for these races is marked out in advance by flags. The jockeys entered parade their horses on the lawn and are then escorted to the post by mounted stewards and the starter. When the cavalcade is out of sight a minor game begins and continues until the racers come flying across the turf in their finish.

About New York the programs of the gymkhana vary according to the tastes or certain advantages a club possesses for a certain line of sport. At the Country club of Westchester, where the lawn overlooks the sound, there may be funny tub races or other aquatic features and also a race at claybird shooting at the traps on the edge of the water.

At Knollwood and Ardsley matches on the putting course are added to please the golfing members. They are not ordinary putting competitions, but a sort of obstacle race, in which the shots have to be made through headless barrels, around persons sitting in chairs, over fur rugs spread on the turf and under other novel conditions.

At Meadow Brook, Essex county, the Rockaway Hunting and the Whippany River clubs polo pony trials and races are always prominent. The Rockaway Country club has always some odd golfing competition. The Tuxedo club does not go in for gymkhana until ice sports may be added to the cards.

Many of the best gymkhana meets are at private houses or on the grounds of hotels. A wheelbarrow race in which men impersonated the vehicles and ran forward on their hands while women held their feet made fun at a recent hotel gymkhana.

Automobiles figure in gymkhana in many ways. There is not time enough, as a rule, nor room enough for motor car races, but sometimes a series of dash races may be arranged.

A competition to bring out the handiness of the drivers at backing, turning and encircling posts is the easiest to run off and most often seen at the gymkhana. A parade of decorated automobiles is very pretty. The winning car in such a ceremony in October seemed a huge white chrysanthemum, for it was a mass of the largest sort of the flowers.

At Southampton gymkhana there is usually a driving competition for women, the conditions requiring a pair of horses to a phaeton. The drivers have to cut figures on the turf and put their pairs at speed between narrow passages without hitting the marking flags.

Annually at the Nassau Country club, usually the Saturday before Thanksgiving day, what is called a golf gymkhana is run off. Novel approaching and putting matches are arranged, besides special handicaps of a topy turvy order. The prizes are suggestive of the holiday season, for they are sucking pigs ready for the pan, big turkeys and capons, braces of partridge or quail, mammoth pumpkins, clumps of celery, a bushel of apples and similar tokens.

This is a departure from the rigid idea of a gymkhana, for by rights some sort of equestrian sports should be on the program.

Curious and Romantic Capers of Cupid

Miss Vanderbilt and the Count.
THERE is to be no divided house over the Vanderbilt-Szecheny nuptials. Mrs. Vanderbilt has won over the entire family, and the complete reconciliation was celebrated in Newport, when Mr. and Mrs. Reginald Vanderbilt and Mrs. Alfred Vanderbilt attended the dinner given by the mother of the bride-to-be in honor of her fiancé.

It is agreed that the promise Gladys gave her late father to take none but an American husband shall be forgotten henceforth and the prejudice against foreigners which has animated most of the Vanderbilts ever since Consuelo's alliance with Marlborough has been dispelled by the devotion of the Count himself.

Miss Vanderbilt is the youngest child of the late Cornelius Vanderbilt, and on her mother's side is descended from the Gwynnes, a western family. She made her debut nearly three years ago at a large dance at her mother's house, the feature of which was a barnyard cotillion, with stacks of corn, garden implements and all the other farmyard accompaniments.

Since then she has spent a large part of her time abroad. Her engagement, like that of other heiresses to immense wealth, has been rumored again and again, and it is a surprise to her friends that she should elect to wed a foreigner.

Miss Vanderbilt is petite and unassuming in manner, simple in her gowning, reserved and quiet. She is not pretty, but is an excellent singer, and has studied vocal music under Jean de Reszke. Her mother, whom she resembles greatly in size and appearance, has been her inseparable companion. Mrs. Vanderbilt has gray-blue eyes, dark brown hair, and a rather fair complexion. Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney is her sister.

Of her brothers the eldest, Cornelius Vanderbilt, married Miss Grace Wilson, sister of Lady Herbert and Mrs. Ogden Goelet, and R. T. Wilson, Jr.; Alfred Vanderbilt married a Miss Elsie French, sister of Lady Chesham, and Reginald Claypoole Vanderbilt married Miss Kathleen Neilson.

Count Laszlo Szecheny is the youngest son of the late Count Emmerich Szecheny, at one time Austrian ambassador to Germany. The count has four brothers.

Count Szecheny belongs to one of the greatest families in Hungary. He was born in 1879, and has had the usual military career of the Hungarian aristocrat. He has the rank of imperial chamberlain, is a reserve lieutenant of the Ninth Hussars, and is an hereditary member of the House of Magnates, the upper house of the Hungarian parliament. His father was Count Emmerich Szecheny, who died in 1898, and was for several years ambassador for Austria to the court at Berlin.

Heating a Bridegroom.

While his bride of less than a week looked on, hardly realizing what it all meant, Harry C. Forster, captain of the Manhattan Council Guard, L. C. A., of Dairies, Pa., seized by more than a score of armed members of his command, shackled hand and foot and after being marched through the borough to the music of a life and drum corps, was court-martialed and convicted of the heinous offense of getting married without settling the claims of his fellow lodge men. Edward Rhymer, another member of the guard, who was married a few weeks ago, was induced to go along to help ease Forster, when he himself was seized and chained to the man he had come to put through a course of sprouts. Regular

shackles and handcuffs were used to chain the men together in their march through the town, which was viewed by hundreds of residents. With torchlight and to the music of the band, both men were paraded through the principal streets, after which they were halted in front of the Buttonwood hotel, where the court-martial proceedings were held. Lieutenant Joseph Hals of the Mantoloking Guard, assisted by Captain L. Howard Fielding of Long Guard, Jr. O. U. A. M., was in charge of the ceremony. In a stentorian voice he read the charges against both men and asked what should be done with them.

"Execute them," was the answer, and to the cheers of the men Forster and Bythorpe were led to the cemetery gates, where they were chained to the post, and after the entire guard had danced around them like Indians around a victim burning at a stake, a firing detail was drawn up and at the command "Ready, Aim Fire," three volleys were fired. There followed a reception at Forster's house. Captain Forster was married to Miss Catherine M. Brough of Norwood and had just returned from Niagara and Canada when he was seized and hanged.

Bridal Tour in Africa.

Of all American girls who have married well-known foreigners, few have had such interesting journeys as that planned for Miss Amy McMillan of Detroit, who became the bride of Sir John Lane Harrington, October 12.

Miss McMillan is the daughter of the late United States Senator James McMillan of Michigan, and for several seasons has spent her summers at Eagle Head, her mother's summer home in Massachusetts.

Sir John will take his bride from the continental life of the North Shore to the wild west country laying claim to a place in the family of Christian nations—Abyssinia—and to the court of King Menelik, to which he is accredited as Great Britain's minister plenipotentiary.

This journey will take the bridal couple more than 7,000 miles by sea, and then about 60 miles from the coast to the city of Addis Ababa, on the wild uplands of Ethiopia, a vast, almost undeveloped land, lying south of the Sudan, to the east of the upper waters of the Nile.

Picks Her Fourth Husband.

Baroness Alexandri, who was first the wife of Phineas T. Barnum, the famous showman, and since his death the wife of two other men, has just decided to take unto herself a fourth husband, in the person of Count Jacques de Bréy, a Frenchman.

The prospective Countess de Bréy is still a very handsome woman. Her second husband was Demetrius Callias Boy, a Greek, in the Turkish sultan's service. After his death she gave her hand to Prince Alexandri, a French nobleman, who died.

The last marriage was arranged by a prominent French woman, who has bestowed many American wives and their fortunes on impetuous but titled Frenchmen. The French newspapers announce that Baroness Alexandri has an income of \$100,000. Well informed Americans say that the Barnum estate pays her \$40,000 a year.

Curious Marriage Notice.

A recent number of the St. Petersburg Herald contains this curious marriage notice: "To the Public—All relations and friends are notified herewith that the undersigned have agreed to become man and wife without civil or religious ceremony and that we have, each of us, taken upon ourselves the duties and obligations which are imposed upon married people in lands of culture. Inasmuch as it is not

possible for us to be married according to the rites of the church and to comply with the requirements for civil marriage, we are forced to this method. Should one of us fail to keep this mutual agreement the other will submit to divorce. Maria Grigorjevna Ogus, Alexander Alexandrovitch Restor."

Up-to-Date Ritual.

At Clayton, Mo., John Bryan, millionaire soapmaker and poet, married Miss Fredricka Murphy of Cincinnati, a young woman thirty years his junior. They refused to stand during the ceremony; they had the word "holy" stricken from their marriage certificate, and the bride received no wedding gift from her husband, who, however, is said to have settled \$200,000 on her.

Carpenter's Letter

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edge of lower Nubia, in the center of the Nile just above the first cataract, and it is reached by ferry boat from Shellal or from Assouan and the dam. The island is about 1,500 feet long and 500 feet wide; it is almost covered with temples built by the Ptolemies and others, two or three centuries before Christ.

The chief deity of Philae was the goddess Isis, but Osiris, Hathor and the gods of the cataracts were also worshiped there. Under the Roman emperors the temples were enlarged, but when Egypt was converted to Christianity the hermits and other fanatics made their way into Nubia and took possession of it. They turned some of the temples into Christian churches and their mutilations of the splendid carvings put up in the honor of the gods of old Egypt can be plainly seen.

In the Assouan Quarries.

The ruins today are well worth a visit. Some of the structures have a forest of columns about them, and the Moab, which is known as Philae's bed, is one of the most beautiful of the Egyptian temples. The stones of which Philae is built are of great size. They probably came from the Assouan quarries, or it may be from the granite rocks in the desert about.

The region is almost all granite. I rode for about thirty miles on donkeyback over it, making my way through the desert in and out of granite boulders, worn smooth by the sandstorms of thousands of years. The rocks are of all shapes and are so piled up, one on another, as to make one think that the gods had used them as building material. Here one stands high over those surrounding it, as though on a pedestal; there, others are massed like fortifications, and again they rise in towers.

During my stay there I visited the Assouan quarries, the great stone yards from which the obelisks were taken and from which came the mighty statues of Ramses and the stone blocks of the great edifice of the Theban temples. The quarries today are much the same as they were when the Egyptians left them 2,000 or 3,000 years ago. One can see the marks of their wedges on the rocks and the markings of the old stonecutters are plain. In one place there is an obelisk half finished lying on its side, just as the masons of the Pharaohs left it ages ago. When the stones were gotten out for the Assouan dam the Italian workmen used many of the obelisks which the ancient Egyptian mechanics had begun to cut; and indeed that great granite structure was made in partnership by two sets of mechanics who were born thousands of years apart.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

W.B. CORSETS

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