

# Naming Cows and Calling Horses

TWO nights in motor camps have reminded me that men and women snore—some so loudly that they are easily heard across the seas of darkness separating the caravans. I snore, too, I am sure; but the only person in a position to say much about that is too kind to say it. I have no doubt that I am an average performer, seldom rising to the heights of those who sleep on their backs and have obstructed breathing passages, but capable of arousing murderous thoughts now and again. I once lived with a man who shook the walls every night and gave them an occasional rumble every afternoon. It was such an astonishing per-

however, must snore sometimes, as ewe lambs sometimes grow horns. But he is a stupid man who ever hears them.

I HAVE often wondered on what principle owners and breeders name their animals and by what method they eliminate the last contenders. Horses are comparatively easy, since thoroughbreds at least have been named for many generations, and the chief problem for *nouveaux riches* owners is the classical spelling. Pronunciation ceased to matter the day the first

JANUARY 4 race was broadcast.

Trotters certainly present some problems, with no precedents to follow, but since the breeders of trotters don't usually carry Lem-

because her coat was exactly the colour (something between chestnut and golden syrup) of the plaits of a girl who used to sit in front of me at school and receive my silent admiration. But that was thinking back 60 years, and we found a difficulty in adjusting ourselves to so distant an echo. Then I noticed that Grace had a cast in one eye, very slight and very attractive—one of those deviations from the symmetrical that are so fascinating in women—and before I realised all the implications I had said goodbye to Grace and good morning to Belinda.

"WHAT call do you use," Dick asked me, when I came back from the south, "when you want the cows to come home? I tried the old horse call today—kep, kep, kep—and they came down the hill at the double."

I have, in fact, never used any call but "Come on," and while I am very willing to credit Dick

JANUARY 8 with a better approach than my own,

I suspect that he got his response by craft. To answer him was, I am sure, to get a cabbage, and it would have made no difference if he had called in Mau Mau.

But I had forgotten, until Dick brought it back to me, that we did once say "kep, kep" to our horses. I think we lengthened the first call and clipped the next two—"ke-ep, kep, kep"—and the horses did sometimes come home. Our success was greatest when they could see us and had reason to expect a reward; but I don't think it was ever certain. A solitary horse would come, a horse that was lonely and hungry, but a call to a whole team usually did no more than make them lift their heads and look at us, then look at one another, and then, I seem to remember, start for the farthest corner of the paddock.

I know that animals can be trained to answer a call as parrots can be trained to talk and magpies to whistle. But the process demands patience and time, and the result—once you get past highly intelligent animals like dogs—remains unpredictable. They call pigs in America and sheep in Palestine, and the response is usually good. We call calves, hens, cats and pet lambs and seldom have to wait long for their arrival. But when a call no longer means a meal, a dog is the only animal we can depend on in all circumstances. When Mary called the cattle home across the sands of Dee, home meant food and shelter. When an eastern shepherd calls his flock, the flock has lived with him every day and followed him to green pastures. Even then the Arabs have a proverb: "Trust in Allah, but tie up your camel."

I have seen a solitary horse follow a man for days in the wilderness and run away as soon as it reached familiar country. I have seen bullock-drivers turn tired and footsore animals loose at sunset and travel five miles to find them next morning. Animals don't really like us. Only dogs are glad when they hear our voices and are not hungry for food. We can twist the others to our ways, work through their appetites until a sound brings a fairly constant response, but it is seldom quite constant, and very seldom hearty.

(To be continued)

JANUARY 2 obstructed breathing passages, but capable of arousing murderous thoughts now and again. I once lived with a man who shook the walls every night and gave them an occasional rumble every afternoon. It was such an astonishing per-



"A call did no more than make them lift their heads"

formance that I used to lie listening without any annoyance until I fell asleep myself—I suppose to add my own feeble contributions.

But I don't know why we are all so touchy about snoring. It is an unpleasant noise at an inconvenient time, but not so unpleasant as many other noises we ignore without difficulty; not so disturbing as the barking of dogs, the whistling of engines, or the banging and clattering of trams and trucks, and not so untimely as the crowing of roosters on moonlight nights. But no one likes to think that he snores, and most angrily deny it. When we are at last compelled to admit it by the multitude of witness against us, we consign them in our hearts to hell; and when they in their turn offend we gloat like schoolboy louts.

We seldom tell our close friends that they snore. It is too delicate a matter to discuss in mixed company. The man who tells his wife that she snores would be wiser and kinder to leave home. A nurse told me once that there is no difference at two in the morning between a man's ward and a ward for women. But I knew she was being kind to me. I know that men snore more consistently, more aggressively, and more unpleasantly than women. Women,

prayers in their pockets, they don't usually worry what happens to names so long as they are registered. Breeders of sheep and cattle—stud breeders—have long since reconciled themselves to the ridiculous. If your heifer is "Parihaka Lowland Duchess Josephine VIII," it does not matter much if a further absurdity is added, or one taken away; nor should it keep you awake if your ram is "Paekakariki Arran Quiver" in the Flock Book and becomes "Paritutu Arran Quote" in the newspapers. You decided to be difficult when you registered him, and the last thing you want is familiarity in his presence. You remember, too, that many New Zealanders first learnt the names of the aristocracy—Lord Cranbourne, the Earl of Onslow, and some others—not from Debrett but from cardboard notices tacked on stable doors.

But none of this helped us when we had to name our heifer. Though she has tattoo marks in both ears—letters in one and figures in the other—we don't know what they mean, and have had three different answers from three different dairy farmers. So we began by calling her Jenny—for no reason than because it was a name we liked. We felt, however, that a name should have a reason and changed Jenny to Grace



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