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OSTRICH FARMING.

How the Bird of the Beautiful Plumage Is Raised.

A California Industry That Returns Good Profits, Though the Risks Are Great—Some of the Ways and Characteristics of the Ostrich.

Among the many points of interest about this city is the Pasadena Ostrich Farm, writes a Cincinnati Enquirer correspondent from Pasadena, Cal. It is only a short ride from town.

On one of the innumerable sunny, cloudless days that come to Southern California we visited the ostrich farm. Over the entrance gate are the words: "Admission twenty-five cents." We had been invited to look at the rare birds, so our purses were none the lighter for the visit.

Before us was a picketed inclosure, over one side of which canvas is tacked, that the curious passers-by may not have a view of the ostriches without paying the admission fee.

Leaving the carriage we walked along to the far side of the inclosure. As we stood before the fence the keeper gave a peculiar call and the ostriches hurried toward us. We had expected such great birds to move awkwardly. Instead, they move with an easy, gliding gait not unlike the camels. Perhaps both acquired it in the same way—from walking over the deep sands in their native land.

There must have been twelve or fifteen ostriches in the corral. They are strange-looking creatures, with long, bare legs, broad, flat bodies, and long, serpent-like necks, well suited to their small heads and bright eyes. The body of the ostrich is from four to five feet high, and the head rises high above the back, eight or ten feet from the ground.

As we gazed at the strange birds one of our party remarked, laughingly, that the saying, "A bird in the hand, etc.," seemed to have lost its meaning.

Standing before eight or ten of the queer birds, with their small heads darting here and there, by the quick twists and curves of the snake-like necks, is enough to make one uncomfortable. The legs are so stilt-like that, for a time, only scaly, bare legs and writhing necks impressed us.

We offered a few oranges in our outstretched hands. The necks wriggled over the high fence and quickly the oranges were snatched from our open hands and swallowed whole.

We know that this is true, for we saw them passing down through the long, slender necks. The most fortunate of the ostriches showed two or three distensions of the neck.

The bird's foot has two toes—indeed, it may be said to have one great toe with another seemingly undeveloped.

But it is for its plumage that the ostrich is noted. We turned our attention to the plumage.

The great bodies are thickly covered with overlapping feathers, looking somewhat like thoroughly worn-out tips. The male birds are black; the females a brownish gray.

We were greatly surprised to see the number of plumes on the wings—not less than thirty or forty overlapping on the tip of each wing.

The keeper threw several handfuls of corn to the ostriches, also some alfalfa (a kind of hay), cut up and wet with water. They seemed greedy, but we were told it did not require a great deal to keep them.

While the heads were darting about for the feed on the ground the keeper lifted one of the wings and ran his hand through the mass of feathers, calling forth an exclamation of surprise and delight from each of us.

The finest, heaviest plumes in which women always delight are the tail feathers—the soft white ones are from the tail of the male bird. Long white feathers also tip the wings of the male, but the most of his wing feathers are black.

These are the three natural colors—black, white and gray—and after cleaning the feathers are ready for use, if the natural color is desired. Of course, the white ones must be bleached, and if some color other than those mentioned is desired, it is obtained by dyeing.

At the farm the wing feather may be had for about $1.50, the price varying with the size of the feathers.

An ostrich egg is about the length of one's hand and about as wide, in form like a hen's egg, excepting that it is less pointed. It is heavy in proportion to its size, for the shell is very thick; in appearance it is like porcelain. We saw three shells "blown out" like Easter eggs. The price of the empty shell is $1.50! The fresh eggs are not to be had at any price.

Tourists buy the empty eggs. Some decorate them for their Eastern homes. But they would certainly be much more pleasant without the "decoration."

Here in California the eggs are hatched in incubators. We were told that hatched in this way the young birds made their appearance after forty days and are then about the size of a hen.

In Africa, the home of the ostrich, the eggs are often left for days with no other heat than that of the sun. Here the nights are so cold that the only practicable way of hatching the eggs is by the use of an incubator.

The birds of which I have been writing are about four years old, and were imported from Africa. The length of time required to bring eggs to this country from Africa is so great that it makes their importation wholly impracticable.

Should the conditions here prove favorable to the raising of the ostrich it ought to be a very profitable business. Each bird bears so many plumes, and these may be gathered yearly.

In many localities in Africa where the ostrich was once found in great numbers, they are rapidly disappearing before the march of civilization.

From early times their plumes have been admired and worn. The demand for them seems to be increasing rather than diminishing. Their demand has made what is called "ostrich farming" very profitable in Africa. In a wild state from five to fifty ostriches may be found together. The nest is a shallow pit scraped out of the sand with their feet. In this nest from four to five females lay their eggs. When ten to twelve eggs are laid the cock begins to brood. During the night he is surrounded by his wives. This is presumably to guard the nest from jackals and other wild animals, rather than to assist in hatching the eggs, for they are often left for days to the heat of the sun only. About thirty eggs are laid in the nest and as many more are scattered around it.

Hunters often cover themselves with masks of ostrich feathers, and in this way approach the shy birds. Only the young birds are captured.

If the ostrich in Southern California misses the torrid heat of its native country, it surely could not desire a sunnier land than this.

The industry is in its infancy here. Time will tell how profitable it will be when those engaged in the business thoroughly understand "ostrich farming."

The New York Post-Office.

The New York post-office is the largest business establishment, affecting the greatest number of people under the Government of the United States. It delivers and collects every year a number of letters, papers, etc., six times as numerous as the entire population of the Union. It handles in each year over $85,000,000 in money-order business, while its own receipts are over $5,000,000, and the net revenue of the Government is $3,250,000.

ROMANCE AND BLANKETS.

Dear Mr. B. Made a Pleasant Remark and He Meant It.

Even a dry-goods store may be selected by fate as a place for a romance, as the following story from the Brooklyn Eagle proves: In one of the big up-town dry-goods stores a spinster saleslady of twenty-five years was sighing her lonely life away in the ladies' and children's department on the third floor, while a widower sales-gentleman, aged forty, was becoming gray and bald with the care of three children among the blankets down in the basement. Was it the subtle but strong power of affinity, or was it only family necessities that drew those lonely hearts together? Who can tell! Neither will ever forget that day, that hour, three weeks ago, when they first gazed into each other's eyes. He had come up-stairs to her counter.

"What can I show you?"

"Children's stockings, please."

"What numbers?"

"Four, five and a half and seven. Two pairs each, please."

"Walk this way. Now, how do you like these?"

"I always get that kind."

"But this kind wears much better. Lovely day, isn't it? Quite a family, eh? Yours? Why doesn't your wife do the buying? Oh! Cash! No, I won't forget the discount. What department are you in? Blankets ought to be soft. Oh, yes; I love children. What name, please?"

"You're a girl after my own heart," said the widower, as he walked away with the stockings.

"A girl after my own heart." These words rang in the lonely saleslady's ears. Like the parson who kissed the fiddler's wife, "she couldna sleep for thinkin' o't." The next day she sent a boy with a note to the blanket department in the basement. The note said:

DEAR MR. B.: Please tell me what you meant by saying I was a girl after your own heart. I have a particular reason for asking.

LILLIE M.

Mr. B. wrote back saying he meant nothing. Next Miss M. visited the blanket department. She wanted a "comforter." Of course Mr. B. waited on her.

"Where shall I send this, Miss M.? Yes? Is that your correct address?"

"You can easily find out if you call."

"May I call?"

"Certainly. What did you mean by what you said up in my department?"

"Nothing."

"You must have meant something."

"Well, maybe I did."

"I think you are just terrible. Such short acquaintances, too."

The first visit settled it. Cupid bagged them both. They combined their respective gentility and were made one last Sunday. The widower's hair has become a rich, glossy brown again, and his two-dollar-and-a-half smile is the most bewitching to be found anywhere in his line of business. As to the "girl after my own heart," the sacred curtains of home now conceal her, but the sound of her chirping can be heard for half a mile.

BUYING A DIAMOND.

A Globe-Trotter's Peculiar Experience at Colombo.

How a Man in Search of a Rare Gem Found One—He Buys It for Four Thousand Rupees, Only to Learn That He Has Been Cleverly Swindled.

It was at Colombo that we met him, says a writer in Leisure Hours. He was the beau ideal of a rich young globe-trotter. We used to see him in the deep verandas of the Galle-face and Oriental hotels, surrounded by the best gem-dealers, bargaining and buying at, for them, an exhilarating rate. He had bought rubies, he had bought sapphires, the best pearls and the finest cats-eyes to be obtained for love or money, and still his money seemed abundant. He was a gentlemanly fellow, for all that, and did not parade his wealth intentionally. Stones had a fascination for him. Probably some member of the sex that chiefly wear them had also, that we know not. How they would look out for his return. How their eyes, and their fingers, too, would "look brighter when he came."

He had often said that he meant to look out for a really fine diamond, but naturally found that these gems are not indigenous, or even existent, upon the spicy isle. Agra or Delhi were the places. Of course there was no place like London, but he wished to possess a stone uncontaminated by pawnbrokers' fingers, uncivilized and unchristianized, without a flaw, and also without a pedigree; a gem which had perhaps wasted its brightness, the virgin sparkle of its many facets, in the darkness of some native hoard until he caused it to be admired, worshiped, disparaged or coveted by the fashionable world of her Majesty's or Covent Garden.

There were at this time in the roads no fewer than five mail steamers, two of the Messagerie and three of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. Over seventy first-class passengers had to change steamers at Colombo, and wait two days before re-embarking for Australian ports, whither most of them were bound. Dinner that evening was a pretty sight. Seldom had we seen so many English complexions and so many Parisian dresses gathered round the small tables, or such airy flounces and pretty hair waving under the influence of the punkahs. Our gem-setting friend was dining at our table, and asking no end of questions about up-country life and the planting enterprise.

After dinner he proposed a game of billiards or pool. In the only room in which play was not going on was a gentleman whom we recognized as one of the Australian passengers. There being three, he was asked to join in one game, to which he consented. Upon the first stroke he made I could not help noticing two things—first, that he handled his cue in quite an enviable manner, and that he had upon the third finger of his left hand the very finest diamond ring I had ever set eyes on. The stone seemed as large as a small nut, and the flashes of light it reflected from the gas-jets over the table were dazzling. The attention of our friend, it was easy to see, was riveted upon this ring, which his eyes followed round the table. The Australian passenger seemed a very pleasant man, and soon we all became more friendly.

"What a lovely ring that is you are wearing. Would you allow me to see it?" said our young friend, presently.

"Oh, with pleasure; but I am ashamed to tell you it is only paste," said its owner, slipping it off his finger and allowing us all to look at it.

It is needless to say whose fingers soon held it, while his eyes seemed to reflect the brilliancy of the stone.

"Nonsense, man," said he, pleasantly, "I know something about diamonds and don't know when I've seen such a perfect one."

"Ah, that stone has deceived even jewelers by artificial light. I only wish it were a real diamond, for it would be worth about six hundred pounds."

"It is worth every penny of it," said the other, enthusiastically. "How did you come by it, if it's not an impertinent question to ask?"

"It was left me by my aunt," said the owner. "She knew it was only paste, although she always wore it, and I was very fond of the old lady, so I wear it, too."

We all said good-night and parted, each one of us thinking a good deal about the beautiful ring. After breakfast the next day S—— and I drove over from the club to the hotel, where we had promised to "tiffin" with young "Golconda," as we called him. He was there with a bevy of native "tambles" around him, displaying very inferior gems, which he refused to look at.

The Australian passenger soon strolled up, and asked my companion if he was disposed for a return match at billiards. These two had seen each other before breakfast, and young "Golconda" had backed his opinion of the diamond ring to the extent of offering four thousand rupees for it. During the game he renewed his offer, but the other said he did not wish to sell the ring at all, and especially as a real diamond, knowing well that the stone was paste.

"Will you lend me the ring, then, and allow me to show it to a native jeweler with whom I have been dealing? If he recognizes the stone as a diamond, too, I will repeat my offer, and also will give you an open check on the bank for the amount before closing time this evening." "Look here, gentlemen," said the Australian, "of course I'll sell the stone for that, if any one can be so rash as to buy it at that price; but, you see, mine will be an awkward position. I know the stone to be paste, so I can not and will not sell it as a diamond. If you, sir," turning to the would-be purchaser, "will give me in writing a statement to the effect that you buy the ring as a paste, all well and good; but I warn you honestly you will find that you are deceived in imagining this to be a diamond."

Young Golconda took the ring to his native connoisseur, who in a moment pronounced it to be a diamond; he also went to a European store and showed it to the proprietor. The man, after testing it, said that not only was it a diamond, but that he himself would give 4,500 rupees for it.

The bargain was struck, the requisite statement signed and the check given, all in the presence of the native jeweler, S——, the Australian and myself; and young Golconda sat all through tiffin with the ring upon his finger. He asked us the next day to come round with him shopping, and among others we visited the store proprietor who had tested the ring. Again the man looked at it, took it to the light, shaded it from the light with one hand, again he called for a file, touched it lightly and said at once:

"Sir, you've been done; this isn't the stone you brought me yesterday—this is paste."

And paste it was! Somehow the ring had been changed, although we none of us remembered seeing it touched by the hands of the clever swindler who had sold it. And yet he had done it. The ring had lain on the billiard table during the signing of the paper. The purchaser had paid 4,000 rupees for a ring "knowing the stone to be paste."

The Australian had taken ship, undetached from his lovely diamond, but not before young Golconda's check had been carefully cashed.

MR. BRIGHT'S COOLNESS.

The Great Commoner's Meeting with a Rabid Tory Clergyman.

The following incident is related by the London St. James' Gazette on the authority of W. L. Bright, M. P.: "Mr. Bright went into an agricultural district one day, and he had to walk from the station a long way into the village. On the way a clergyman who was driving in a dog-cart came up to him, and the two men passed the time of day. The clergyman offered to drive Mr. Bright into the village, and Mr. Bright accepted the offer. The clergyman was a Tory, and he had been reading a speech Mr. Bright had made the previous night; and turning to Mr. Bright he said: 'Have you seen the paper to-day, sir?' 'Yes,' said Mr. Bright. 'What's in them?' 'Why, that rascal John Bright has been making another speech.' 'And what was it about?' asked Mr. Bright. 'Why, so-and-so and so-and-so,' and he went on to relate the incidents of the speech. Then they discussed the topic, and Mr. Bright said: 'Well, it is just possible that Mr. Bright may have been right, and that he was only expressing his honest convictions. There may be something in it.' 'Oh, no, there can't be,' said the irate clergyman. 'If I had him here, I'd feel just like shooting him.' Neither revealed his identity, but before they separated the clergyman invited Mr. Bright to go to his church next morning, and Mr. Bright promised to go. And he kept his word, as he always did. The clergyman took for his theme Mr. Bright's speech, and at the conclusion Mr. Bright thanked him for his very able sermon. As he was going home to dinner a friend of the clergyman met him and said: 'You have been preaching under distinguished patronage this morning, then.' 'No,' said the clergyman. 'Oh, yes, you have,' said the friend. 'You had John Bright among the congregation. You must have noticed him in the front in the middle pew. I know him perfectly well, and I assure you it was Mr. Bright.' 'Why,' said the clergyman, 'I drove him to the village yesterday in my dog-cart, and called him a rascal and execrated him in all the moods and tenses, and he never said a word. He kept perfectly calm and cool. I have insulted him. I must go and apologize at once.'"

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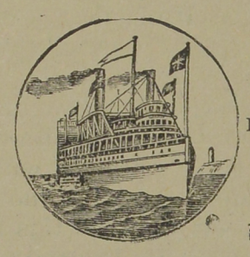
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The first term of the Collegiate Year 1889-9 begins on the 29th of August next, and the 2nd term on the 2nd of January, 1890.

For further particulars address the President for a Calendar.

Sackville, Aug 10., 1889.