

a wicked and perverse people, although I have always cherished a hope that you somewhere were as a shining light in the world.'

'Thank you,' he said, as tea was announced, 'and I thank God that I have been kept true to him and to you,' and all of our guests said 'Amen.'

Old Romeo, the Feathered Policeman.

('Child's Companion.')

Some thirty years ago a number of 'ostrich farms' were started in South Africa for the purpose of raising the birds for the sake of their feathers. The young birds are kept in flocks, and roam about over large farms, bounded by wire fencing. When young, the birds are sociable and domesticated, but some of the old birds are really ferocious creatures, a kick from one of them being sufficient to stun a horse.

In her 'South African Stories,' Mrs. Carey-Hobson gives an amusing account of some Hottentot thieves who were caught stealing fruit, and in their haste to escape, one of the party got into the enclosure in which an old bird and his mate were engaged in the process of hatching.

The three Hottentots had been caught by the gardener and his helpers in the act of

their retreat, or to go towards the nest, and thus endeavor to entice the male bird away. A sight met their eyes.

The Hottentot, being taken by surprise, had been knocked down at once, and the bird was kicking and tearing at him most unmercifully, quite determined to have no such intruder in its own especial ground.

His shirt and trousers were torn to ribbons, and that the bird's sharp, cruel, iron-like claw was inflicting personal torture was evident by the cries, accompanied by such sentences, uttered spasmodically, as—

'Ach, if you please, oh, take him away! Oh, Heere! I shall die!'

Tom and Hendrick thrust the mimosa bough, covered as it is with long sharp thorns, up against the creature's neck. A fight ensued, but by degrees they succeeded in driving him back, telling the man at the same time to get out of the way—which he was nothing loth to do, crawling on all fours and declaring he was dead!

But when Hendrick told him that if he did not get out of the bird's sight it might escape from the 'thorn tack,' and be after him again, he managed to get up a run, and clambered over the wall so briskly that he nearly tumbled into the arms of Gubbins.

'There, yer black rascal, if old Romeo

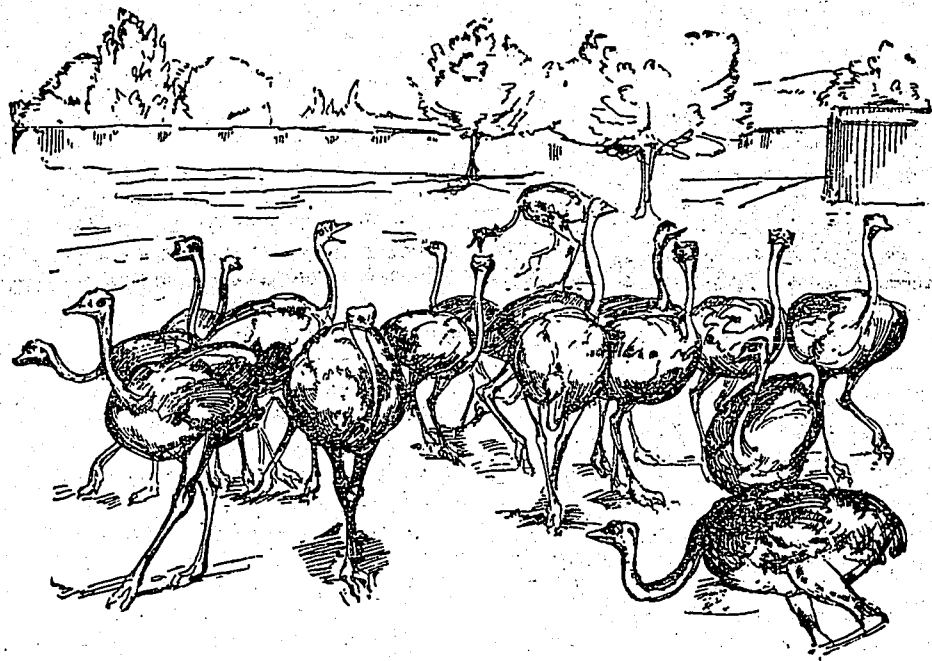
'Humph!' said Gubbins—and able to go stealing again!'

'Not where you and Romeo keep joint guard,' said Tom, laughing. 'He's as good as a watch-dog for you there. I think he has given that poor fellow a lesson. But I hope that he may one day learn the lesson, not only that wrong-doing brings its own punishment, but that virtue is its own reward.'

Fruits After Their Kind.

'Can you make room for another boy in the house, do you think, wife?' asked Mr. Coleman one evening long ago. 'If you wish it, I suppose so,' was the dutiful reply, and when her husband brought home the orphan, Bob Cowan, to his fireside, Mrs. Coleman extended to him a share in the motherly care and affection she had beforetime bestowed on her own two sons.

Mr. Coleman did not like to see the son of his old friend turned adrift on the world, and as he was prospering in his business, he thought he would be able to feed, clothe, and educate Bob until he was able to do for himself. If the boy were grateful, and repaid his kindness, good and well; if not, why his outlay would not be missed, unless some unforeseen catastrophe happened. Bob was fourteen; a strong, independent lad whose life had early taught him to think and act for himself, and that, happily, without spoiling him, for he was unselfish and affectionate. When he came to the Colemans, he was terribly grieved by the loss of his father, who had so lately died, and he deeply felt their kindness to him. He was ready, too, to acquiesce in all Mr. Coleman's rules, for that gentleman prided himself on being methodical, and had quite a code of laws for the government of his household, and both father and mother considered Bob a good example to their own boys. One day, some weeks after his arrival, he had overheated himself in the summer sun, and, coming in tired, he grew gradually faint, and staggered into a chair. Mrs. Coleman brought water and bathed his temples, while Mr. Coleman hastily poured some brandy into a glass, and held it to his lips. Bob set his teeth together, and pushed the glass from him, and, feeling better, he rose himself and took a draught from the water-jug. 'Take a drop of the brandy, Bob,' 'Never,' he said, in a low hard voice. 'What ails you at spirits, Bob? You never taste them.' 'It was one of the things my father and mother were strict about. They would never allow me to taste such things, and though they are taken from me, I don't mean to forget their commands.' 'Surely no,' said Mrs. Coleman kindly; but her husband left the room with a frown and a hurried stamp, for his mode of bringing up his family was very different from the Cowans'. Six months after, Bob lost his comfortable home through his firm adherence to his total abstinence principles. He declined to go to a tavern to buy drink, and when Mr. Coleman found he persisted in his refusal, he told him to seek a home somewhere else, as his roof could no longer shelter a boy who not only acted absurdly himself, but set an example of disobedience to his patron's sons. So one morning Bob made up a bundle of his clothes, bade good-bye with a sad heart to kind Mrs. Coleman, and Sandy, and Willie, the merry boys who had welcomed him so heartily, and who mourned his departure so sincerely, and with a dry good-bye to Mr. Coleman, and sincere thanks for past kindness, he left the house with a greater sense of loneliness even than when he turned from seeing his father laid in the grave. When clear of the town, he sat down by the roadside, partly to indulge in a few tears which would come in spite of



ON AN OSTRICH FARM.

stealing; in their flight one of them suddenly turned aside.

'Good gracious, Master Tom, he's making for old Romeo's camp!'

Tom called loudly, and warned the man of his danger; but the fence was gained, and over he went.

'That bird will punish him,' said Hendrick.

'Sarve him right,' said Gubbins. 'I wish the other fellow had gone too.'

'Quick, Hendrick!' said Tom. 'Where are the thorn boughs? The old cock bird will nearly kill him if we don't prevent it.'

'I'm sure I shouldn't prevent his having a good mauling; the fellow richly deserves it.'

'Come now, Jack!' said Tom. 'You wouldn't let that vicious bird kill the fellow because he stole a little fruit.'

By this time they also had reached the wall, and Tom and Hendrick had just taken up a large bough of mimosa-thorn that had been placed there for the purpose of keeping the cock bird at a distance when they had to visit the nest. They heard the bird call and make a rush; then the cries of the Hottentot.

'Oh, Heere! Oh, Heere, he'll kill me! Oh, Baas, Baas, he'll kill me!'

They ran as quickly as they could, leaving Gubbins at the wall, to be ready to help

hadn't half killed yer, I'd have had the greatest pleasure possible in giving yer a hammerin'; yer won't come here a stealin' agin, I warrant. Ye'd better go to yer wife, and let her mend yer scratches and breeches, and if she don't give it ye, she ain't no woman! Yer companion in wickedness is inspannin' the oxen, so as he's left ye in the lurch onest to-night, p'raps he may do it again if yer not sharp.'

The man went off as he was told. Tom and Hendrick fought their way backwards.

'Now, Hendrick, jump over,' said Tom.

'Nay, master, you first!'

'Do as you're bid, there's a good fellow; then you can keep Romeo off with the bough.'

They were soon both in safety.

'Pon my word, old Romeo,' said Gubbins, 'you know how to give hard kicks. That fellow's clothes were a'most peeled off his back! At home we used to call the policemen "peelers," and I'm sure you're p'liceman and peeler too.'

'Well,' said Tom, 'the poor chap won't forget that peeler in a hurry. I am sorry he has had quite so many of old Romeo's hard knocks, but I did my best to warn him not to go there. However, he has no bones broken, so he will soon be all right.'