

Young People's Department.



THE OSTRICH.

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THE ostrich is the largest bird in the world, and it has some peculiar habits. It can only live in a very hot climate, and takes great delight in the burning sands of the desert. You generally see about five ostriches herding together. One of these is a male bird. The others are females. The females lay a very large egg, and some people think that they leave their eggs in the hot sand to be hatched by the sun, but this is not altogether true. The fact is that they are very careful about hatching their young. The male bird is just as much interested in it as the others. Indeed, he helps in it, for he takes possession of the eggs himself every night and sits on them, like a hen sitting on her eggs. But it would be a funny thing to see a "rooster" sitting on them. The female bird takes care of the eggs

during the daytime, but, as the sand and sun are both very hot, she often leaves her nest for an hour or so at a time. This is probably what gave rise to the story that she leaves her eggs to be hatched by the sun. An ostrich nest is a great big hole in the sand in some concealed place, banked up all round the sides. Outside this nest, as well as inside, are to be seen a large number of eggs. Why is this? Because it is not easy to get food in the desert, and therefore the ostriches leave eggs all round the nest that the young birds, when they come out of the shell, may eat them. The ostrich is sometimes a very stupid bird. If attacked, it buries its head in the sand and thinks that it is hidden from its enemy, quite forgetting that the rest of its great, big body can be plainly seen. It is mentioned twice in the Bible. Try to find out the two passages, and see what is said of it there.