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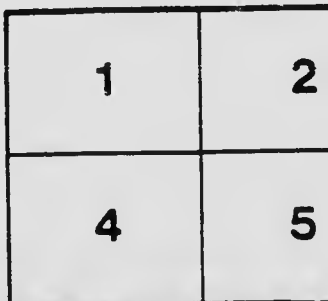
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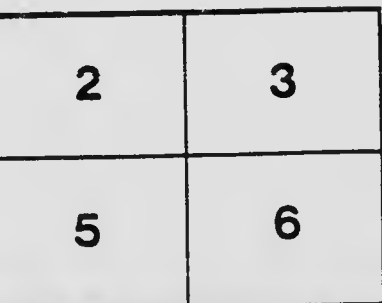
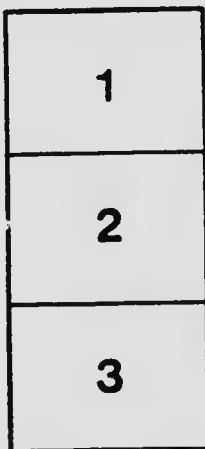
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THE OSTRICH.

Far away in Africa, where there is a burning sun overhead, with little else than sand under foot—in waste and desert places, where few animals can live—is to be found a strange, large bird, six or eight feet in height, which, from its fancied resemblance to the camel is sometimes called the “camel-bird.” This strange bird is called the ostrich.

It has a long, narrow neck, almost bare of feathers. The wings are small, and cannot be used for flying, but they help it to run. Its legs are long and very strong. The feet, which have but two toes, are something like a camel's and can bear great fatigue. Its color is a rusty black, but its wings and tail-feathers are white.

The feathers of the ostrich are very beautiful, and are carefully preserved by the hunters, and sent to America and to Europe, where they are dyed and used to trim bonnets and hats.

The ostrich feeds on the tops of such plants as grow in the desert, and it can go a long time without water. Its cry sounds, at a

distance, so much like that of the lion, that it is often mistaken for one.

Ostriches go about in small flocks. The females lay their eggs in one nest, each laying from ten to twelve. During the day they take turns in sitting upon them, while the male takes this duty at night. He continues to watch over the young birds for some time after they are hatched, and to protect them from jackals, tiger cats, and other enemies. These animals are sometimes found lying dead near the nest, having been killed by one stroke from the foot of this powerful bird.

Ostrich eggs are very good to eat, and one of them is equal to twenty-four hen eggs. They are about six inches in length, twelve in circumference, and weigh from three to four pounds. As said above, all the eggs in a nest are not laid by one bird.

The ostrich can run faster than the quickest horse. The Arabs, however, hunt it, and manage to catch it. When the hunter has started the bird, he puts his horse into a gentle gallop, so as to keep the ostrich in sight, without coming near enough to frighten it, and set it running at full speed. Finding itself pursued, it begins to run slowly at first. It

does not run in a straight line, but in a circle, while the hunters, crossing the circle or running in a smaller circle, keep near the bird and do not tire their horses.

The chase is often kept up for a day or two, while the hunters take turns to rest their horses. The ostrich at last becomes tired out and half starved, and finding it impossible to escape, tries to hide itself in some thicket, or buries its head in the sand, foolishly believing, because it cannot see, that it cannot be seen. The hunters then rush at full speed and easily kill the bird, but they take care that no blood is allowed to get on the feathers.

—*Blackie's Comprehensive School Series—Third Reader.*

THE LION.

The lion is a noble-looking animal. He is found in Asia and Africa. The African lions are larger and stronger than those of Asia.

The lion belongs to the cat kind; that is, he is similar in form and structure to the cat. He is about eight feet long, and his height is about four feet and a half. The lion is of a

tawny, yellow color, but some lions found in Persia are nearly black. The male lion has a fine mane. This grows longer and thicker as he becomes old.

The female lion is called a lioness. She is about one-fourth less in size than the male lion. Her form is more slender and graceful, and she has no mane. She is very fierce, and will defend her cubs with her life.

The lion seldom attacks any animal openly. During the day he lies asleep in some dark thicket in the forest. At night he comes out to seek his food. He lies down in the long grass near a stream, or pond of water, and waits until some animal comes to drink. As soon as he sees one drinking, he creeps slyly through the reeds. Then with a spring and a loud roar, he jumps on the back of his victim.

He seizes his prey by the neck, as a cat does a mouse, and shakes it until it is dead. If he misses his aim, he seldom runs after his prey. He goes quietly back, and lies in wait for another animal. When he has seized the animal, he carries it off in his mouth to his den in the forest. He then feasts upon it as long as it lasts.

The strength of the lion is very great. One has been known to carry a horse in his mouth more than a mile from the spot where he killed it. He often carries off young cattle, and has been seen to leap over a wall with one of them in his mouth.

The lion is very much afraid of man, and will not come near his dwelling-place, unless pressed by hunger. When one is known to be in the woods near a village, the men make a fire, and keep up a great noise all the night to drive him away.

The roar of the lion sounds at a distance like thunder. When cattle hear it, they rush about in great alarm.

If the lion is caught while young, he is very easily tamed. He is often taken about from town to town, in wild beast shows. The lion will perform many tricks at the command of his keeper, and will let him put his hand in his mouth.

—Blackie's Comprehensive School Series—Third Reader.

THE TIGER.

The tiger is one of the fiercest animals found in the world, and yet it belongs to the same tribe as the quiet, gentle cat that lies asleep before the fire. Lions and leopards also belong to the cat tribe.

All these animals live on flesh. They watch silently for their prey, and then, with a sudden bound, they seize it in a moment.

We know how silently puss walks and peeps about the house. We have seen her suddenly pounce upon a poor mouse, and carry it off in triumph.

Tigers do just the same. Their feet, like the cat's, are padded and cushioned at the bottom, so that they can walk softly, and without any noise.

Tigers have whiskers, too, just like pussy, and these whiskers help them to feel their way.

We have all found out what a rough tongue pussy has. The tongue of the tiger is like that of a cat, but much rougher. This is very useful in eating flesh and cleaning bones.

Indeed, the tiger's tongue is so rough, that if it were to lick the hand it would cause the

blood to come, and if a tiger has once tasted blood, it cannot resist the temptation to get more.

A story has been told of a tame young tiger once licking the hand of his master, who was asleep. The tiger only intended to show his love for his master, but the animal's rough tongue made blood come, and the pain awoke his master.

He tried to draw away his hand, but a low, angry growl told him of his danger. The tiger had tasted blood, and he was no longer tame. All the old wild passions of his nature burst forth, and he must have more blood.

His master knew the tiger's cruel nature, and was prepared. With his other hand he quietly drew a pistol from under the pillow, and shot the animal dead.

It is very well to have a pretty, gentle cat as a pet in our house, but surely a tiger, however young and tame he may appear, is not a very safe animal to have as a pet.

The color of the tiger is a light tawny brown, with beautiful black stripes or bars, which go nearly round the body. On the tail these stripes form complete rings. The

under parts of the body, and the inner sides of the legs are almost white.

He has no mane, and his whole body, though not quite so tall as the lion's, is more slender and graceful. His head is also shorter and more rounded than that of the lion.

The tiger is a native of India and the Indian Islands. Some are found in the western parts of China. In India he reigns supreme as king of the jungle. The lions themselves are afraid of him. He can swim well, but cannot climb trees.

When the female tiger has cubs, she will attack either man or beast that goes near them.

The people who live in those parts of the world where tigers and lions are found, are more afraid of the tiger than the lion. When the lion has had enough to eat, he will not attack any other animal, but the tiger will kill anything that comes in his way.

He does not run like most other animals, but bounds over the ground in long jumps; he can go faster than the swiftest horse.

The tiger is hunted with elephants and large dogs. The hunters sit on the back of the elephant in a kind of cage, and march

through the long grass of the jungle, until they meet with a tiger. Sometimes he will turn even on the elephant, and tear the driver from off his back.

This terrible animal has attacked soldiers on the march, and killed men working in the fields. A tiger has been known to run down the street of a village, and pick up a little child at play, and carry it off.

This kind of tiger is called "the man-eater." When one is known to be near a village, the men will form themselves into parties, and hunt him with guns, until they have killed him.

The best and safest place for us to see one of these cruel animals is in the Zoological Gardens, London. If we watch him closely, as he walks up and down his large iron cage, perhaps growling at us, as if he would like to eat us, we shall find another point in which he resembles pussy.

We shall see that his claws do not touch the ground as he walks. He can draw them in just as pussy can.

A cat can play with a child, and its feet are soft like velvet ; but if pussy is angry, out come her sharp claws, and give us a scratch,

if we are not careful. Tigers can do just the same. So the cruel, terrible tiger is a very close relation to gentle, purring puss.

—*Blackie's Comprehensive School Series—Second Reader.*

THE LITTLE GIRL THAT WAS ALWAYS "GOING TO."

I wonder if any of us know this little girl. She does not mean to be a naughty girl, as she loves her father and mother, and would be very sorry to disobey them. She wishes to do well, but she does not carry out her good wishes.

Let us watch this little girl for one day, and then let us see if we know her. When told to do anything or go anywhere, she means to do it and thinks she will do it *soon*, but then she forgets all about it. Her good and kind mother thought she would try to cure her.

In the morning this little girl came running in with the string of her hat torn off. "Please, mother, will you sew my hat-string on? The wind keeps blowing my

hat off, and I can't keep it on." "Yes, my dear," said her mother, "I'm going to"; and she went quietly on with her own work.

The little girl waited a minute or two, and then said, "Now, mother, please will you?" "Yes, my dear, I'm going to," was the answer; but still the mother went on and on. "Oh, mother, please do it now," said the little girl. "Oh," said her mother, "I thought it would do soon, but as you want it at once, I must do it." This made the little girl think for a minute, but she soon got her hat again, and off she ran into the garden to play with the big dog.

Soon the mother called to her girl, to tell her dinner was ready, and that she must come at once. "Yes," said the girl, "I'm going to," and off she ran for another romp with the faithful old dog. She forgot all about dinner, but in she came running and feeling very hungry, just as it was over.

Her mother was just going into the garden to speak to the gardener, when up ran the little girl. "Please, mother, give me some dinner; I am so hungry." "Yes, my dear, I'm going to," said her mother, but on she went towards the garden.

The little girl thought of what she had been doing, and running up to her mother, and sobbing, she said, "Dear mother, do give it me now; I am so hungry." And the big tears began to roll down the cheeks.

Then this good mother, taking up her child in her arms, and kissing away the tears, said to her, "Now, my dear, you see how tiresome it is not to do what you are asked to do at once.

"You see how unhappy you would be if I always said to you, when you asked for anything, 'I'm going to,' and then forget all about it. You would often feel very hungry, and your home would be very sad. I hope you will try, my child, to obey directly, and break off this bad habit of always saying 'I'm going to'."

Do any of us know this little child?
Do you think we could tell her name?

—*Blackie's Comprehensive School Series—Second Reader.*

COFFEE.

Coffee is an evergreen plant ; that is to say, the leaves of the plant are green all the year round. When it is found wild, it grows to a great height—four or five times as high as a man ; but when it is grown in gardens, it is not allowed to grow to a height of more than five feet, or about as high as a big boy. It is kept low, so that the work-people may be able to pick the fruit when it is ripe.

Coffee grows in nearly all the hot, moist countries of the world. Its leaves are thick, long and shiny, and its small, snow-white flowers have a most delightful smell.

The fruit, which holds the seeds, is very much like a red cherry when it is ripe, and is sweet and good to eat. Inside each fruit two seeds lie, just as the cherry stone lies in the middle of a cherry, or the pips in the middle of an apple ; and it is these seeds that we take and use as coffee.

Each coffee plant gives no more than about a pound of seeds. When the fruit is ripe, it is picked and laid out in the sun to dry, and turned over and over very often ; the outer part is then very easily rubbed off by the hand, or by wooden rollers.

As soon as the seeds are free from their fruity covering, they are spread out again in the sun to get still drier. Then the husks, which bind the two little seeds together, are rubbed off and blown away, just as the husks or outsides of the corn are blown away from the ears of wheat.

The coffee seeds are then packed in bags, and sent down to the seaport to travel far away to all the countries in the world where coffee is drunk. We must not forget that when the coffee seeds are packed and sent off they are grey—not brown. They do not become brown till they are roasted, and after they are roasted they have to be ground to a powder.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, a French captain was going to America, and he thought what a good thing it would be if he could get the coffee plant to grow there. So before he sailed he got three plants.

He tended them very carefully during the voyage; but by-and-by a great storm arose, the ship was driven out of her course, and the supplies of food and drink became very small. Each person on board got just so much and no more; only a very little water was given to each man every morning

The French captain got just as small a share as everyone else ; but small as it was, and thirsty as he often felt, he always gave half of it to his coffee plants. Two of them died before he landed in America, but the third was brought safe to shore and planted. It took root and grew well, and it is from the patient Frenchman's one coffee plant that all the coffee of America has grown.

—*Blackwood's Standard Reader—Book II.*

TEA.

Tea, coffee and cocoa, from which we make such pleasant drinks, are all of them some part of a plant ; and they are brought to us in ships by sailors from lands far away over the seas.

Most of our tea comes from China ; and the part of the tea-plant that is used is the leaf. We can easily see this for ourselves, if we look carefully at what is left in the teapot after all the tea is poured out.

Take one of the little brown scraps, unfold it gently, and we can see it is either a leaf or part of a leaf, long and narrow, with rather jagged edges.

Now the tea-leaves look very unlike the tea when it came from the grocer's ; then it was hard and crisp and black . But how did it get to look like that ? What has the Chinaman done to it ?

In April, when the leaves are ready to be picked, the Chinaman and his wife and children go out into their garden and pick the first young leaves off the tea-plants. These make the very best tea, and they will get most money for it.

In May a fresh crop of leaves shoots out, and the busy Chinaman, with his small, funny black eyes, and long pigtail hanging down his back, sets to work again and picks these.

Another crop comes in June, and still another in August. But this last is the coarsest and poorest of all, and will fetch very little money.

When the leaves are picked, they are dried slightly in the sun, in flat baskets ; then they are dried again in metal pans over a gentle fire. Afterwards they are poured out upon a table, and the Chinaman rolls them with his long, dark fingers into the little black grains which the grocer sells us.

The tea is packed in boxes that have been lined with lead-paper; the boxes are sent down to the sea-coast, and away they are carried in swift ships to all the countries of the world.

The next time you are in a grocer's shop, perhaps the shopman will be kind enough to show you a Chinese tea-chest. The outside is covered by a bright many-colored pattern, and it is quite unlike what an English carpenter would turn out of his workshop.

Tea was brought to this country a little more than two hundred and fifty years ago; but such a very small quantity was brought that it was at first very, very dear. As much as ten pounds (£10) was paid for a pound of it, and never less than five pounds (£5). Now we can get very good tea for two or three shillings a pound.

In Russia, where a great deal of tea is drunk, lemon-juice is used with it instead of milk and sugar.



