

mass of information is given as to the tribal divisions, habits, languages, and migrations of the several groups; but these details often obscure those broader features of physical and mental peculiarity which are of most importance in arriving at correct conclusions as to the primary divisions of mankind and the true affinities of the various races.

It is impossible here to notice the many interesting questions which arise as we peruse the mass of facts and opinions set forth in such a work as this. Although unequal in treatment, and in many respects imperfect, it exhibits much labour and research, and treats in more or less detail every branch of the great and rapidly-developing science of anthropology; and it forms on the whole as good a manual of the subject as we are at present likely to obtain from a single author. It is to be hoped that when another English edition is required some well-instructed anthropologist may revise and edit the work, so as to modify (by means of footnotes or otherwise) the unusual treatment of many questions of which our author gives a more or less one-sided exposition.<sup>1</sup>

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#### OUR BOOK SHELF

*Ostriches and Ostrich Farming.* By Messrs. De Mosenthal and Harting. 8vo. pp. i-xxii, 1-246. (London: Trübner and Co., 1876.)

If ornithologists have regretted the apparent retirement of Mr. Harting for the last few years from the field of scientific research, they will find on consulting the present volume that his devotion during that time to popular science has not impaired his powers, but has perhaps tended to increase the gift which he always possessed in a high degree, of being able to present to his readers the details of science in interesting and attractive language. We have been induced to make the above remarks, inasmuch as no one would suspect that under the above title is comprised a very complete monograph of the *Struthionidae* from the pen of Mr. Harting, but such is really the case, for, out of a volume of some 250 pages, three-fourths are occupied with the history of the ostrich and its kindred. This portion of the work is entirely written by Mr. Harting, and, like everything he undertakes, is executed with thorough conscientiousness. The true Ostriches (*Struthio*), the Rheas (*Rhea*), the Emu (*Dromæus*), the Cassowaries (*Casuaris*), and the Apteriges are all passed in review, and a complete monographic account given of each; the history of the ostrich and its distribution in times past and present being very exhaustively compiled. We can heartily commend the

<sup>1</sup> The translation is from the second edition, yet there are a considerable number of errors and oversights, some of which it may be useful to point out. First we must notice that the copious table of contents is rendered quite useless by the absence of a single reference to the pages at which the several chapters and sections begin or end. Among errors of fact we notice (at p. 2) that the *Hyllobates* is said to "stand far nearer to man than the other three highest apes;" at p. 20, that the Dutch are not acclimatised in the East; at p. 117, that the Malays always use the word *stone* in counting as "three stones chickens," the fact being that *stone* or *seed* is used for inanimate objects only, *tail* for living things, as "three tails chickens," &c.; at p. 204 "the Sunda, Banda, and Molucca Islands," are said to have formerly bound together Asia and Australia, but by subsidence have become "groups of islands in a shallow sea;" and again, at p. 205, the Gulf of Mexico and Caribbean Seas are both said to be *shallow*, and to show a former connection with the continent; p. 343, Papuans are said to smelt iron ore; this I think is quite erroneous, though on the coast they work iron brought them by the Malays and traders; at p. 344 the Papuans are said to cultivate *trees*, and to possess "only seedless varieties of the bread fruit," the exact contrary being the fact; at p. 413 guinea-fowls are put as natives of the New World, and "prairie dogs" as domestic animals; at p. 414 the "ounce" is put for the "jaguar;" at p. 423 "*Crax*" guinea-fowls, are said to be bred for food. Of oversights or mistranslations we notice at p. 85, lines 10-11, figures which are quite unintelligible; p. 366, line 1, "allows too long" is a bad translation; p. 368, line 2, "outbreak of the pestilence" refers to the nutmeg disease.—A. R. W.

illustrations in this volume, very good full-page drawings of the principal Struthious forms, having been designed by Mr. T. W. Wood, while the Zoological Society has allowed the woodcuts which have illustrated Dr. Sciater's various memoirs on the *Struthionidae* to be utilised, so that a very complete monograph of these birds is the result.

Mr. De Mosenthal's portion of the work is confined to the practical "Ostrich Farming," and seems to be extremely well worked out, giving a history of the development of the pursuit from its first commencement. The author's personal experience has been confined to South Africa, where ostrich-farming has acquired its chief importance, but the statistics of the exportation of feathers from the other parts of Africa show that at present the greatest trade is done through Egypt, the annual value of the exports from this country being 250,000*l.* The Cape comes next with exports to the value of 20,000*l.* less, while from Barbary the value is 100,000*l.* annually, from Mogador 20,000*l.*, and Senegal 3,000*l.* The whole of the process of the artificial incubation of the eggs is described with minuteness, and altogether the contribution is most entertaining and instructive. The volume concludes with an appendix giving consular and other reports, all of which supply important statistics and interesting historical matter bearing on the subject.

*Die Darwin'sche Theorien und ihre Stellung zur Philosophie, Religion und Moral.* Von Rudolf Schmid, Stadtpfarrer in Friedrichshafen. (Stuttgart, 1876.)

A GLANCE through this book will not satisfy the reader that the great problems of modern thought are to be settled even by the well-meant essays of a well-read pastor. It is one of the "reconciliations" of science and religion, so common in England, but less so in Germany, where people are in general unwilling to check views on scientific questions by their relation to theology. The author impresses on his readers that the theory of universal law is compatible with the Christian doctrine of miracles, and that the Darwinian hypothesis of development may really receive strong support from the doctrine of human development in a future state. But his arguments prove little or nothing one way or the other. Next, turning to the Creation, we find him placidly remarking that the order of its stages is given differently in Genesis and again in Job, his inference being that neither order is "binding on us." The six days, in his opinion, are not natural days, nor are they geological periods, for neither would this fit with the geological evidence; he therefore concludes that they are "divine days," whatever that may mean. Such reading ought to suggest to religious minds the serious question whether disbelief can do so much harm as the habit of perverting and mystifying belief. We may hope that when theologians have become more familiar with the theory of evolution as manifested in the development of religious ideas themselves, their reconciliation of man's religious tendencies with his scientific knowledge may be placed on a higher basis than in such attempts as this, of which the weakness is only made more conspicuous by its good intention.

E. B. T.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

##### Sea Fisheries

As an enthusiastic amateur sea-fisher some twenty years ago on the Canadian coast of what the Americans call the "herring-pond," perhaps you will allow me to make a remark or two on Mr. Holdsworth's letter in NATURE, vol. xv, p. 135. Long absence from that happy hunting-ground has not beclouded my