Animal Acclimatization at Woburn Abbey.

During the last four years the Duke of Bedford has carried out a scheme of animal acclimatization in the park of Woburn Abbey on a scale never before attempted in this country. Birds as well as quadrupeds are the subjects of this experiment, and the magnificent pheasants of India and China haunt the woods in large numbers. But the greater number of the animals are various kinds of deer, of which no fewer than thirty-one species are in the open park or paddocks — bison, zebras, antelopes, wild sheep, and goats, and yaks. The novelty and freshness of this experiment consists not only in the accumulation of such a number of species, interesting as this is to the naturalist, but in their way of life, free and unconfined in an English park. That is the lot of the greater number of the animals at Woburn, some being entirely free and wandering at large, like the native red deer and fallow deer, while the others, though for the present in separate enclosures, are in "reserves" so spacious, and so lightly though effectively separated, that they have appearance of enjoying the same degree of liberty. Almost the first question which suggests itself is—What is the general effect of this gathering of over-sea animals, from the African veldt and Indian hills, the Manchurian mountains and North American prairies, and from wild animal land *quod ubique est*, on the green pastures and under the elms and oaks round the home of a great English family? Briefly, we may say that the effect is magnificent. During the journey back by train through Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire, the valleys and meadows stocked with our ordinary domestic animals seem solitary and deserted after the eye has rested for hours on the varied and impressive forms that crowd the slopes, groves and glades of this fine park. This effect is due in part to the largeness of the scale on which the stocking of Woburn with wild animals has been carried out. In the phrase of the farmer, the park "carries a larger head" of animals than is commonly seen on a similar area, even in the richest pastures. The scene recalls the descriptions of the early travelers in Southern Africa, when the large fauna roamed there in unbroken numbers, and with little fear of man. The *coup d'œil* in parts of the park where the animals gather thickest is so striking that the mind descends reluctantly to the identification of the species, or to details of dates, origin and management. From one position, looking up a long green slope towards the abbey, there could be seen at the time of the writer's last visit between two and three hundred animals, both birds and beasts, feeding or sleeping within sight of the immediate front of the spectator. These varied in species from cranes, storks, and almost every known species of swan, to wapiti stags, antelopes and zebras, walking, sitting, galloping, feeding or sleeping. For quite half a mile up the white swans and other wild fowl were dotted among the deer and other ruminants, presenting a strange and most attractive example of the real "paradise" which animals will make for themselves when only the "good beasts" are selected to live together.

The creatures in this animal Arcadia were grouped nearly as follows: In the foreground was a large pool, circular, with clayey banks, one of a chain of ponds of all sizes, from that of a fishpond to a large lake which lies lower in the park. On and around this pool were many species of swans, and eight of foreign geese; but the greater number of these were scattered, as we have said, over some hundred acres of park. In the centre of the pond sat a cormorant, and on the grass by the margin some gigantic cranes with crimson heads and grey wings were running and "dancing" in honor of the sun, which was making its first appearance in four days. On the hill to the left, where the abbey lies, were five distinct herds of deer. Three of these were fallow bucks and does. One herd was of red deer, and hybrids between the red deer and the wapiti. On the skyline were a herd of pure bred wapiti, with three huge stags, their horns just cleaned from the velvet. In the centre slope, in diminishing perspective till they appeared mere dots among the trees, were mixed groups of Japanese deer, the same breed which had thriven so remarkably in the parks of Sir Edward Loder and Lord Powerscourt, fallow bucks and does, red deer, both "red" and pure white, of which variety the park holds a considerable number, a few other and smaller foreign deer, and a group of five nylghau antelopes from India. Three of these were reddish gray in color, while two were real "blue bulls," very fine upstanding beasts, well suited to woodland scenery. On the right, within a hundred yards, lying down or feeding under an ancient elm, were a small herd of zebras, as quiet and at their ease as so many New Forest ponies with their foals. Picture this animal population among the groves and ancient timber of an English park in May. Nor is this more than one among many such sights visible in this unique paradise.—*Spectator.*

DRINKING WATER.—No sensible person need be told that pure water is as essential to good health as pure air, and we cannot be too careful of this most necessary article of domestic economy. An open vessel of water will render the air of a room purer, but the water itself will, in a few hours, be totally unfit for use by reason of the fact that most all the carbonic acid gas and ammonia, the result of respired gases, is taken up by it. Hence, water for cooking or drinking should, if kept inside, be in tightly covered vessels. Where well or cistern water is used the better plan is to keep the pail on the outside.

Vasco de Gama.

The English ought to respect the memory of Vasco de Gama, for he made their fortune. With the possible exception of Columbus, no explorer ever exercised such an influence on the fortunes of the English speaking race as this gentleman adventurer of Portugal. He changed for nearly four hundred years the grand route of commerce, and threw open Asia to the traders of the world, including specially traders on the Atlantic. Before he discovered, in a vessel of 160 tons, the way to India round the Cape, the only roads to India were those via the Mediterranean, across the Isthmus of Suez, and down the Red Sea, or across what we now call Asia Minor, down the Euphrates, and through the Persian Gulf. Both routes were in the hands of the daring Arab seamen, who conquered the territories on the eastern coast of Africa, founding powerful settlements in India, and became, as Solomon and his Phœnician allies had become centuries before, monopolists of the carrying trade between two continents. From the time of his discovery, however, the old routes, which were exceedingly dangerous, were abandoned, and in time so nearly forgotten that the use of the Asiatic one by Captain Chesney, in 1831, was hailed as a new discovery, and De Lesseps' scheme for cutting the Isthmus of Suez was derided on the ground that the Mediterranean and Red Sea were on different levels, and could therefore only be connected by a gigantic system of locks. It is not too much to say that but for Vasco de Gama the States on the Atlantic would never have been successful in founding a trade with Asia, and that the commercial greatness of England is due, first of all, to a Portuguese adventurer. Daring seamen as they were, the English could have made nothing of the overland route, the control of which naturally belonged to the traders of the Mediterranean, and the Turks and "Moormen" with whom they made alliances. * *

These early explorers had something to stir their imaginations which is lacking now, the charm of infinite possibilities. * * * They hoped for wealth, they thirsted for adventure, but, above all, they longed to pierce the obscurity which then, even in the minds of the learned, overhung the greater portion of the world. The charm of the unknown was upon all the captain adventurers as, fighting the currents, fighting the storms, fighting their own men who often mutinied, apparently from fears like a child's fear of darkness, they sailed away into the sunrise with a courage which the boldest of modern Arctic voyagers have never surpassed, even if they have rivalled, for Sir J. Franklin and Captain McClure, whatever they expected to find, had no fear of meeting devils, and the Portuguese explorers were never sure. Why should there not be devils in lands given up to paganism when there were wizards at home? No explorer can have their fears now, or their delight and triumph when they found anything, and Vasco de Gama, for one, found the India which Columbus only half a dozen years before, sailing ever to the sunset, had hoped to find, but instead succeeded in another quest. Our voyagers and explorers experience but a pale reflection of the charm of the unknown. The world has been searched and mapped and charted till it is seen to be but a little place hardly enough for its people, yet which will never grow any bigger. Captain Cook found the last unexplored continent, and now it is scarcely possible that there exists even an island of which the experts at the Admiralty or Lloyd's could not give us some account. We have not reached the North Pole, and there is a wilderness of land to be discovered somewhere in the far south, if the Antarctic fog would only lift, but in neither can there be any new human beings. * * * We do not know whether the oxygen in the world, as Lord Kelvin seems to suppose, will ever be consumed; but we do know that for the restless brood of explorers who have done so much to utilize its resources it will become a shockingly dull place. They will not reach another planet, toil they never so patiently; and we see little hope for them unless they can take to studying butterflies' wings, snails' teeth, or the discovery of some elixir, perhaps liquefied oxygen, which shall prevent pain and arrest the spread of every epidemic disease.—*London Spectator.*

RUSSIA AND THE PAMIRS.—A German geographical periodical gives the following summary of the Russian geologist M. Ivanoff's expedition to the Pamirs last summer. The main mass of the Pamir is by no means covered everywhere with ice and glaciers, which are found only in the eastern parts. Extensive and interesting strata of gypsum and rock salt lie between Hissar and Baljuan. The natives dig sixty hundredweight of salt, or less, daily, and sell it to the inhabitants of the neighboring towns of Bokhara. The inhabitants of the river valleys in the mountainous district of Durwaz find gold. Ruby mines, which also yield other precious stones, and are apparently very rich, were found near Jerm.

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