

On a Hitherto-unrecorded Egg of the Lesser Emu of Kangaroo Island—with a Brief Description Thereof

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An egg of the Kangaroo Island or Lesser Emu (*Dromaius diemenianus*) was discovered by me by accident at the disposal by public auction of the well-known George Dawson Rowley ornithological collection and library, at Stevens's auction rooms, King Street, Covent Garden, London, in November, 1934. The sale drew together a large and select gathering of both English and Continental naturalists who keenly competed for the rare and unique specimens contained in the collection. Included in the sale were the originals of Keuleman's beautiful plates illustrating Rowley's *Ornithological Miscellany*. These plates and two fine examples of the Great Auk and a series of six eggs of that extinct species, together with many other objects of rarity and interest naturally militated against any special attention being given to the less-important items and the latter sold for decidedly low figures in consequence.

Whilst fully realizing Mr. Rowley's enthusiasm in acquiring interesting and rare objects at all times for his collection, nevertheless he was frequently at fault in packing away and overlooking his acquisitions, and, being fully aware of this failing of his I availed myself on the day preceding the sale of the opportunity carefully to check through a medley of old cardboard boxes, mostly containing Ostrich, Rhea and other large eggs (Lots 148-149a, etc.). I am pleased to record that my search was rewarded by my unexpectedly finding a dark-coloured egg bearing an old stained label with a faded ink inscription recording the name of Dr. Lang, Nepean Harbour, Kangaroo Is. With this egg I was also so fortunate as to unearth a loose mss. memo. recording the specimen as having been found hanging from a beam in a seal-hunter's hut and stating that it had "recently been brought in from the bush."

Dr. John Dunmore Lang was, in the early "thirties," minister of the Scots Church and Principal of the Australian College at Sydney and also author of several works and papers on Australian and Polynesian history. That he was interested in objects of natural science is shown by a statement in his work, *View of the Origin and Migrations of the Polynesian Nation*, London, 1834, p. 110, recording how he had discovered during one of his many voyages and brought to England some conchological specimens for study. When on a visit to Kangaroo Island he undoubtedly detected this particular egg in the sealer's hut, and, considering the specimen worthy of preservation, brought it to England. As to how it reached Mr. Rowley I am unable

to offer any explanation. I purchased the lot containing the unique egg, an Ostrich egg collected by Tristram in Egypt, and two other items, for a few shillings.

The egg in general form and shape strongly resembles that of the mainland bird, except in size. It is, however, very finely granulated. The granules are in far less relief and closer than in the common species. The present colouration is very dark malachite, almost black, and is very uniform. The size is 121 mm. \times 84 mm.

Cockatiels and Bronzings in Western Australia.—I was very interested to read, in the last issue of *The Emu*, the note by Mr. Sedgwick regarding the occurrence of Cockatiels (*Leptolophus hollandicus*) at Nangeenan and Dangin where they are most unusual visitors. On March 14, 1935, a pair of Cockatiels visited my orchard here in Bridgetown. I made a note in my diary at the time as I had never before seen the species here. My younger son saw the pair again on October 21, 1935, so they must have remained some time in the district, unless more than one pair happened to pay us a visit. Last year (1935) was noteworthy for the large numbers of the Bronzewing Pigeon (*Phaps chalcoptera*) which have occurred in South-western Australia. In that district, and to the east of it, they have been extraordinarily numerous, occurring sometimes in large flocks. Mr. Roland Benn has written to tell me how numerous they were last year in the Kojonup district and yesterday, when conversing with Mr. Lawson Whitlock, the latter remarked on how numerous they were around Bunbury. It would be interesting to know the climatic or other conditions prevalent in the interior which caused Galahs, Cockatiels and Bronzewings to look for other feeding grounds—H. M. WHITTELL, Bridgetown, W.A., 12/2 36.

Notes on Striated Field-Wren.—When on holidays at Apollo Bay, Victoria, during January and February of last year (1935) I was not surprised to find the Striated Field-Wren (*Calamanthus fuliginosus*) nesting. In the coastal area birds appear to nest early and late. I found the species with young in the same district early in September, 1931. The nest of the bird in the illustration was perfectly concealed, and I spent hours of watching and searching spread over two days before I found it. A hide of bags was erected one evening a few feet from the nest, and next day I was able to take several photographs. The bird would alight several yards away, and creep through the herbage to the entrance of its home. Each time the young were fed, the parent bird carefully sanitated the nest.—L. G. CHANDLER, Red Cliffs, Vic., 21/1, 36.