

## From Magazines, &c.

IN the *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales*, part i. (1902), p. 75, Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., points out that the synonymy of *Eopsaltria georgiana* and *E. gularis*, both of Quoy and Gaimard, has become transposed. He states:—"In his 'Handbook' (vol. i., p. 294) Gould erroneously placed *Muscicapa georgiana*, Quoy and Gaimard, as a synonym of his *Eopsaltria griseogularis*, and also erred in placing *Muscicapa gularis*, Quoy and Gaimard, as a synonym of *Eopsaltria leucogaster*, Gould. Dr. Gadow (*Cat. Birds Brit. Mus.*, vol. viii., p. 178) has similarly confused the synonymy of the two species, and he erroneously describes *Eopsaltria gularis* under the name of *Eopsaltria georgiana*, and the latter species under the name of the former."

Mr. North has thus verified the nomenclature of these species as given in Dr. E. P. Ramsay's "Tabular List of Australian Birds," p. 7 (1888).

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OUR venerable field naturalist and collector, Mr. Kendall Broadbent, has contributed to *The Ibis* (July) "Field Notes on the Birds of Bellenden-Ker." Bellenden-Ker is the highest mountain (5,500 feet) in Queensland. Mr. Broadbent has

enumerated 64 species, with brief but interesting remarks. No doubt the number would have been greater had the trip not been in winter time—June to August (1889). Moreover, rain and mist were great hindrances to collecting work. The paper is unique from the fact that Mr. Broadbent was the discoverer (either on this excursion or on previous ones to other parts of Queensland) of many of the species named. Mr. Broadbent mentions finding *Platycercus elegans* (Gm.) at a height of 5,200 feet. May the Parrakeet not have been the variety *P. e. nigrescens*, Ramsay?

Mr. Broadbent's list of 79 species originally appeared in a report addressed to the Trustees of the Brisbane Museum, under date 4th October, 1889. The birds enumerated were collected by an expedition under the leadership of Mr. Meston.

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IN the *Victorian Naturalist*, vol. xix., No. 7 (Nov., 1902), Mr. A. J. North, of the Australian Museum, has described three new species of Australian birds, namely:—*Rhipidura intermedia*—habitat, North-Eastern Queensland; *Calamanthus albiloris*—habitat, Victoria; and *Amytis modesta*—habitat, Central and South Australia and New South Wales. No doubt he has good grounds for separating the species named.

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SEXING BIRDS.—Without pretending that the rule given is infallible, Mr. W. T. Greene, in a recent number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, puts forward the following as a method of distinguishing the sexes of birds—often a difficult problem:—“If the bird is placed on the left palm, with its head away from the observer, the feathers on the breast will, if the bird is a female, part readily, leaving a bare space, varying in width, with the breast-bone for its centre; if, on the contrary, the bird is a male, the feathers will not divide in the same even manner, but will be found growing, more or less closely, over the whole surface, even over the edge, or margin, of the breast-bone or keel.” Do the observations of Australasian ornithologists bear out this theory?

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IS *MALURUS CYANEUS* POLYGAMOUS?—In the September number of the *Avicultural Magazine* Mr. Reginald Phillips describes how a pair of these birds bred in his aviary in England. After some descriptive notes, he says:—“This morning (26th July) I was paying a stealthy visit to the food corner of my reserved aviary, and was trying to localize certain baby voices which have become rather pronounced . . . when my eye lighted on a long, thin cane, fixed horizontally high up in the aviary, on which was glued, in the sun and quite

in the open, a tiny mite of a light-brown colour. . . . The young bird was a very fair reproduction of the mother, with a shorter, but by no means short, tail. It was fully feathered, and seemed in perfect health and condition." Mr. Phillips questions whether this species is polygamous, an opinion which has been formed by many ornithologists from the fact that in a wild state each male is usually accompanied by a small flock of females. He justifies his doubt thus :—"So far as my own three adults are concerned, the evidence points directly to an opposite conclusion. The two birds which constitute the pair have always been dead against the odd female, and to their persecutions and her loneliness I have attributed her uneasiness. She behaves like a female who is in search of a mate, or at any rate of a quiet home. I feel inclined to suggest that the males, owing to their brilliant plumage, are killed off, leaving a large surplus of soberly-clad females, who follow each male about in little flocks . . . for the sake of companionship." The odd female was so worried by the two who had paired that she was afraid to remain in the aviary.

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REARING AUSTRALIAN PARROTS IN ENGLAND.—Recent numbers of the *Avicultural Magazine* contain interesting notes on the rearing of Australian birds in captivity. In the June issue is recorded how the Swainson or Blue-bellied Lorikeet (*Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ*) reared a brood at the Blackpool Museum. In a footnote to the article, which deals also with the questions of plumage and size of the sexes, the editor adds—"We believe that the extent of the red on the breast depends entirely upon age, and not sex." The Rev. C. D. Farrar tells in the August number of the great difficulty he had in procuring and keeping a pair of Many-coloured Parrakeets (*Psephotus multicolor*), and the anxiety he felt until early in February of 1902 the hen disappeared into a log. The eggs then laid proved to be infertile, but a second clutch followed, and early in June the first Many-colour born in the British Isles was well on the wing. Mr. Farrar says of this young bird :—"I never saw a youngster that could fly so swiftly and well. . . . Many young Parrakeets go back to sleep in the nest for quite a long time. This one never did. The reason may have been that the hen went to nest again about a week before it came out, and she is now sitting steadily on a *third* batch. In the second batch there were three eggs, two clear and one youngster. The young one is a hen. . . . I have just (1st July) been looking at the young Many-colour. She is about three-quarters of the size of the parents." In the September number Mrs. Johnstone chronicles the successful rearing of Barnard Parrakeet (Mallee Parrot—*Barnardius barnardi*) thus :—"The morning on which I believe the young hatched (7th May) there was a sharp frost,

and ice on birds' drinking water, storms of hail and sleet, and a north-west wind. On 19th June, a fine, bright morning, after some wet, cold weather, the first young Barnard appeared. He was seen clinging to the top of the wire-netting in the aviary, perfectly motionless. As far as I could see from a distance he was a dull edition of the old birds. . . . The next day another appeared, exactly like the first, perhaps a shade brighter in colouring, and he took up his position next to the first, at the top of the aviary, clinging with his beak, and quite motionless."

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THE SMUTTY PARRAKEET.—In some notes accompanying a fine coloured plate of this Parrakeet (*Platycercus browni*, Temm.), in the *Avicultural Magazine* for August, Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., says there are perhaps half a dozen pairs of these birds in Great Britain. The first he saw were exhibited in November, 1899, and soon after two pairs were deposited at the London Zoo. "I have not found this species delicate, although it inhabits a hot region." Mr. Seth-Smith has often seen his pair (from which living specimens Mr. Goodchild prepared the drawing for the plate) examining nest boxes, so there seems a probability of their breeding in captivity, or, at all events, that eggs will be laid.

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OUR FINCHES IN BRITAIN.—Concerning the Australian Chestnut-eared Finch (*Taniopygia castanotis*), which is amongst those commonly kept in Europe, in a letter from Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S. (*Avic. Mag.*, vol. viii., p. 234), the following interesting item is given:—"A brood of seven young Zebra Finches recently left the nest in my aviary, some coming out several days before the others. I was much interested, on 15th June, to see some of the elder young ones, still with black bills, and only very recently able to feed themselves, feeding their younger brothers and sisters as they clamoured for food, exactly as the parents fed them. I watched them doing so several times." On p. 239 of the same magazine, a brief note from Mrs. Howard Williams records the rearing of a brood of Ringed Finches (*Stictoptera annulosa*), a postscript notifying the arrival of a second brood. A subsequent article (p. 264) on the subject says that two pairs were purchased in January, and some time afterwards one was observed to be nesting. The first young left the nest on 29th May. "There were three of them, one much larger than the others. In appearance they were very much like their parents, but much lighter, especially the wings and tail, and the dark shading at the top of the beak was hardly noticeable. In one important point, however, they were entirely different. Seen full face they were absolutely ringless, and their breasts were pure white. In profile they showed the beginning

of the upper ring which encircled the face." At nine weeks old they seemed to be moulting, and the parents appeared to be nesting again. Red and Black Gouldians, Banded, Zebras, Waxbills, and Crimson are amongst the Australian Finches given in lists of birds in aviaries, and another familiar small bird, the Zosterops, is also cited.

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EMUS.—From Snowtown (S.A.) comes a record concerning a pair of Emus kept in a yard 100 ft. x 30 ft. A little over a year ago the hen laid 36 eggs, which were taken from the birds. This year the laying consisted of 25 eggs, nine of which were allowed to remain in the nest. After 56 days of sitting by the male bird, seven chicks were hatched, two of which died. There are now (8th October) five fine, healthy birds three weeks old, and with appetites of an extraordinary character. The old birds, usually quite tame, are quite jealous of their offspring.