

to designate them *Strepera fusca*, or the Brown Crow-Shrike. Specimens from Quorn, Laura, and Mt. Remarkable, in the north of South Australia, resembled *Strepera fusca* in general colour, but the speculum on the wings was not so defined, and not nearly so white. The investigation of the birds shown proved highly interesting and valuable in determining the habitat of the species.

Amongst other specimens of note that were exhibited were a Pink-bellied or Bourke Grass-Parrakeet (*Neophema bourkei*), Varied or Many-coloured Parrakeet (*Psephotus multicolor*), Brown Fly-eater (*Pseudogerygone fusca*), and White-browed Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis frontalis*), by Mr. J. W. Mellor. Mr. F. E. Storr exhibited specimens of the White-eyed Duck (*Nyroca australis*) and the Freckled Duck (*Stictonetta naevosa*) from the River Murray. Mr. E. Ashby showed specimens of the Spotted Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis maculata*), Chestnut-rumped Ground-Wren (*Hylacola pyrrhopygia*) from Kangaroo Island, also a pair of Leach Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus viridis*) from the same place. This was noted as being a new locality for the bird, as it is generally found more towards the interior of South Australia. An egg of this species was also obtained from the Island by Mr. Ashby, and was exhibited by Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, together with an egg of another species of the Black Cockatoo for comparison. Mr. M. Symonds Clark showed a pair of the Black Cockatoo (*Calyptorhynchus funereus*) which had been collected on Kangaroo Island many years ago.

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### Nomenclature.

*The Condor* (vol. vii., Jan.-Feb., 1905) contains an article on nomenclature, dealing principally with the American O.U. code. It is proposed to issue a new code, under the editorship of Drs. Jordan, Evermann, and Gilbert, dealing with some of the knotty problems involved in the department of ichthyology; but as the principles underlying the new code have equal force so far as bird-names are concerned, they deserve the attention of the gentlemen who are revising the Australasian bird list, and are worth republication. They are summarized thus\* :—

“The value of a code depends not on the authority behind it, but solely on its simplicity, usefulness, and naturalness. Formal agreements among groups of authors are always marked by compromises in which fitness and exactness are more or less sacrificed in the interest of unanimity of action. These compromises one and all are discarded in the progress of science.

“The different canons in this code are based on those composing the code of the American Ornithologists' Union, and so far as possible the language of that admirable document has been followed.

“Of competitive names otherwise tenable, given by the same author, that one is to be preferred which stands first in the text. In case of

\* A.O.U. in this excerpt must be understood as referring to the American Union.

competitive names otherwise tenable, given by different authors of the same actual date so far as ascertainable, the one standing on the earlier page in its publication must be chosen. [NOTE.] The sole end of laws of nomenclature is that of fixity, and this is to be ensured only by the elimination among names once printed, of all element of choice by later authors. Even among twins, the laws of primogeniture recognizes one as first born. So with names on the same page.

"Canon VII. [Compare A.O.U. XVIII.] In case of competitive generic names otherwise tenable, published simultaneously in the same work, preference shall be given to the one standing first in the work. Of competitive generic names of the same actual or ostensible date (no exact date being ascertainable) given by different authors, that one is to be taken which is proposed on the earlier page of the volume in which it appears. When the same generic name is given to two distinct genera of animals at the same date (as far as ascertainable), the name appearing on the earlier page shall be deemed to have precedence.

Canon X. differs widely from the A.O.U. rulings. Compare with XXI., XXIII. "The type of a genus can be indicated by the original author only. This may be done by direct statement that a certain species is a type species, the leading species, the 'chef de file,' or by other phraseology conveying the same idea; it may be indicated by the choice of a Linnæan or other specific name as the name of a genus, or by some statement which shall clearly indicate an idea in the author's mind corresponding in fact, if not in name, to the modern conception of the type of a genus. The type of a Linnæan genus must be, in the phraseology attributed to Linnæus, 'the best known European or officinal species,' included by that author within that genus.

"In every case, the determination of the type of a genus shall rest on evidence offered by the original author, and shall be in no wise affected by restrictions or modifications of the genus in question introduced by subsequent authors, nor shall the views or the dates of subsequent authors be considered as affecting the assignment of the type of a genus. [NOTE.] It is believed that the principle that a generic name must be fixed by its original author is one of vital importance in nomenclature. All processes of fixing types by elimination, or by any other means resting on subsequent literature, lead only to confusion and to the frittering of time on irrelevant questions. The method of elimination cannot be so defined as to lead to constant results in different hands. In general it is much more difficult to know to what types subsequent authors have restricted any name than to know what the original author would have chosen as his type. Most early writers who have dealt with Linnæan species have consciously or unconsciously encroached on the Linnæan groups rather than made definite restrictions in the meaning of the generic names.

"Canon XI. [Compare with A.O.U. XXIV.] In case a genus requiring subdivision or modification contains as originally formed more than one species, and the author of the genus does not in any way clearly indicate its type, the first species named in the text by the author as certainly belonging to this genus shall be considered as its type. [NOTE.] It can never be unjust to an author to regard his first named species as his type, and it can never lead to confusion to let the genus stand or fall with this first species. The same remark applies to composite species.

"Canon XVII. [Second paragraph.] As a name is a word without necessary meaning, and as names are identified by their orthography,

a generic name (typographical errors corrected) is distinct from all others not spelled in exactly the same way. Questions of etymology are not pertinent in case of adoption or rejection of names deemed preoccupied. [NOTE.] This canon prohibits change of names because prior names of similar sound or etymology exist. It permits the use of generic names of like origin but of different genders or termination to remain tenable. All manner of confusion has been brought into nomenclature by the change of names because others nearly the same are in use. Thus the Ornithologists' Union sanctions the cancellation of *Eremophila* because of the earlier genus *Eremophilus*, of *Parula* because of the earlier *Parulus*, and of *Helminthophaga* on account of *Heminthophagus*. On the other hand, *Pica* and *Picus* are allowed. In ornithology this matter has been handled by a general agreement on the relatively few cases concerned. But in other groups the matter is by no means simple, and every degree of similarity can be found. Thus the genus *Cantherines* is preceded by *Acanthorhinus*, a correct rendering of the same etymology; *Canthidermis* by *Acanthoderma*, also a correct form of the same word; *Thymallus* is preceded by *Thymalus*, *Lyopsetta* by *Liopsetta*. Rafinesque changes *Hiodon* because it sounds too much like *Diodon*; *Trachidermis* has been altered on account of its resemblance to *Trachyderma*, *Ateleopus* on account of its resemblance to *Atelopus*.

"Between forms like *Pachynathus*, antedated by the correctly spelled *Pachygnathus*, and *Aplodontia*, antedated by the more correct *Haplodon* and *Aplodon*, every sort of case may be found. If all names are regarded as different unless spelled alike, these matters offer no difficulty. Any other view gives no assurance of stability."

Although there are several other points of difference of a very minor nature, I shall close this short abstract with the following well-considered canon, a portion of which, as will be seen, departs considerably from present usage in ornithology and mammalogy.

"Canon XXIX. The authority for a specific or sub-specific name is the first describer of the species or sub-species. A name adopted from manuscripts should be ascribed to the person indicated as author in the original publication, whether this person be the author of the memoir in which the name occurs or not. . . . [NOTE.] This canon deprecates the practice of ascribing to the author of a paper descriptions and names furnished him in courtesy or otherwise by some other author. If a writer ascribes one of his species to someone else, we must take his word for it. Thus the manuscript species of Kuhl and Van Hasselt in the Museum of Leyden, although printed by Cuvier and Valenciennes, should be ascribed to Kuhl and Van Hasselt."

Much of the foregoing is doubtless debatable matter, but the reasons for each proposal are well worth thinking over.

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### Stray Feathers.

NINOX *v.* PODARGUS.—Adverting to a note in *The Emu*, vol. iv., p. 36, I camped at Parwan, Vic., during the last Easter holidays and on the Saturday evening, just as the day was drawing to a close the "Mopokes" began to call. I was too tired to move, but a companion went over to the tree (about 150 paces distant)