

the original description from first-hand data of the nest and eggs of the Wattle-cheeked Honey-eater (*Ptilotis cratitia*). [See *Victorian Naturalist*, xvi., p. 111, 1899.] He has likewise missed the species *Ptilotis carteri*, originally described before the Field Naturalists' Club, 13th March, 1899. Subsequently a coloured plate of *P. carteri* appeared in *The Emu*, vol. iii., pl. xvi., 1903-4. To this there is also no reference, nor is there to the critical remarks on the species by Mr. M. A. Milligan (*Emu*, vol. iv., p. 153). Further examples of "omissions" can be cited, but time and space forbid. It is to be regretted that a work which in future years must, from the source whence it emanates (the Australian Museum), be regarded as the embodiment of all knowledge of Australasian ornithology up to its date of publication, should be deficient in any way. As the book now appears the compiler neither does justice to himself as a thorough investigator in the branch of science in which he deals (which hardly anyone can doubt) nor to those whose published records at least deserve—if not reliable—to be *confuted*.

Correspondence.

SOME FIELDS OF RESEARCH.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

DEAR SIRs,—Ornithology embraces not only the study of the external structure and habits of birds, their nidification, &c., but also of everything that relates to them even remotely. In this connection may I call attention to some fields of research which as yet have been barely touched upon amongst us.

(1.) The internal anatomy of our native birds. Let every opportunity be taken by our field workers to study the bony skeleton, muscles, nerves, vessels, and viscera of all the specimens they secure. Make themselves first familiar with the arrangement of these structures in such common birds as Starlings and Sparrows, and then take careful notes of the differences that appear in other birds. Especial notice should be taken of individual abnormalities as distinct from specific ones.

(2.) The pathology of our birds. An absolutely untouched field lies open here. Every tumour or unusual growth, even those occurring in domestic birds, such as poultry, should be carefully and quickly preserved, say in 5 per cent. formalin, and accompanied by full notes. Any epidemic, especially amongst wild species, should be as far as possible investigated, and *post-mortem* examinations made. If an infectious disease, communications should be entered into with some interested bacteriologist, and cultures taken for bacteria. Plague, for instance, in some countries has been known to attack birds such as

Pheasants. Blood films, made by spreading a thin, even film of quite fresh blood on a microscope slide (a piece of glass about $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch—rubbing the smooth glassy surface first with very fine emery paper is a great help), should be taken whenever a bird is shot. There are doubtless many blood parasites present amongst our birds, especially tropical ones, which only await discovery.

(3.) All ticks, lice, intestinal worms, and other parasites should be preserved and forwarded to some authority for identification.

(4.) The contents of the crop, stomach, intestines, &c., should be carefully examined, and notes made of their nature. Insects, if possible, should be identified; seeds also collected, and planted if there seem a prospect of their growing. Burrs attached to the feathers should be identified, and the mud from wading birds collected and examined for the seeds of marsh plants, shell-fish, &c. Certain species of plants, as Darwin pointed out, may be transported over vast distances in this way.

I shall be delighted to be of service to anyone who desires to follow up some of these lines of investigation and requires fuller particulars. I am especially anxious to obtain specimens of tumours and diseased organs, blood films, ticks, and internal parasites, and, where I cannot identify specimens myself, will be happy to forward them into more capable hands.

May I conclude by earnestly calling attention to these various points for study, and expressing the hope that many of our ornithologists may interest themselves in them.—I am, yours, &c.,

J. BURTON CLELAND, M.D.

C/o Central Board of Health,
Perth, W.A., 16/6/07.

CROWS v. RAVENS.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

SIRS,—There seems to be an impression abroad in many quarters that the Crow (*Corone australis*, Gld.) is not found in Tasmania, but that all our birds are Ravens (*Corvus coronoides*, V. and H.) In Col. Legge's "List of Tasmanian Birds" both species are given, and the scientific names are as above. In Hall's "Key" the names are reversed, *Corone australis* being called the Raven and *Corvus coronoides* the Crow, the main difference given being in the bases of the neck and body feathers, which in "*coronoides*" are said to be snow-white and in "*australis*" dusky brown or black. Recently I have examined five or six specimens from this district (some in the presence of Mr. H. C.

Thompson), and all had the snow-white bases to the feathers. Which were they, Ravens or Crows? Has any Tasmanian specimen been found with the dark feather bases? It would be interesting to have this point cleared up, and also to hear from other members whether the feather test has been found uniformly reliable.—I am, &c.,

H. STUART DOVE.

Launceston, 16/7/07.

Obituary Notice.

PROFESSOR ALFRED NEWTON, M.A., F.R.S., ETC.

ALL bird-lovers will deeply regret the death of Professor Alfred Newton, F.R.S., especially many Australian students, who from time to time received his kind encouragement and sound advice in the field of ornithology. Although an Honorary Member of the A.O.U., out of sympathy with the Australian workers he forwarded the ordinary subscription since the Union's inception. His last literary contribution, which appeared in *The Emu*, was in the form of a letter to Mr. Ernest Scott on the subject of Dampier's "Galdens." * To do justice to the life and labour of so great an ornithologist as the late Professor would need a very able pen and a vast amount of research, therefore the editors take the liberty of giving Mr. H. E. Dresser's (a member, by the way, of the A.O.U.) sympathetic remarks as they appeared in *The Zoologist*, 15th July, 1907:—

"Zoologists in general, but especially ornithologists and oologists, will deplore the loss of Professor Alfred Newton, one of our most distinguished and soundest zoologists, who passed away on the 7th of June. Professor Newton, who held the Chair of Zoology and Comparative Anatomy at Cambridge since 1866, was well known and most highly esteemed, not only in Great Britain, but in every country where zoology, and more especially ornithology, is studied, and his writings, though many, were not so voluminous as they might well have been, for he never put pen to paper until he had fully studied his subject, and in consequence nothing that he wrote will pass away, but will stand as a lasting memorial of the care and hard work he bestowed on all that he undertook. Extreme accuracy was with him the cornerstone of all his work, and he would spend weeks of labour and earnest research in verifying any reference. It is scarcely necessary here to enumerate all the works he has written, but amongst these I may especially name his 'Dictionary of Birds,' written with the co-operation of Messrs. Hans Gadow, Richard Lydekker, Charles S. Ray, and Robert W. Shufeldt, a work which is

* Vol. vi., p. 151—a subject continued in the present issue (p. 101) by a letter from Mr. Tom Carter.—EDS.