

with him. He got the Commissioner to agree to the leasing of the islands by the Association. Captain S. A. White, of the Reedbeds, S.A., has been making strenuous efforts for the last twelve months to secure legislation for the protection of the Pelicans and to prevent the so-called aborigines from robbing the nests of Black Swans and Pelicans. The name of the R.A.O.U. has been used in urging such legislation.

When in South Australia last July I spent a week on the Coorong, and visited Pelican and Jack's Point Islands. On both islands there were hundreds of old Pelicans' nests, and on Jack's Point Island the birds were commencing to lay. Forty-two nests contained eggs (full clutch of two in most instances). On Pelican Island two fresh eggs (broken open and the contents eaten by Crows) were found. Lying about the island were the headless bodies of a number of Pelicans, evidently victims of the massacre of 1910. During my wanderings among the islands and along the lake shore I observed not more than 300 or 400 Pelicans. Before the slaughter which aroused such indignation among bird-lovers of the Commonwealth there must have been thousands of these birds on the Coorong. The island rookeries will now, thanks to the efforts of the South Australian Ornithological Association, be less liable to receive visits from bird-killers and egg-robbers; but the Coorong is a wild, lonely lake, and it will be difficult to enforce the laws of sanctuary.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne.

### From Magazines, &c.

**Another Great Kingfisher.**—At the monthly meeting of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, held 31/5/11. Mr. A. J. North exhibited an example of a small race of the Great Brown Kingfisher (*Dacelo gigas*) from the Jardine River, Cape York Peninsula, which he proposed to distinguish as a new sub-species, naming it *Dacelo maclennani* (M'Lennan Kingfisher), after Mr. J. M'Lennan, collector for Dr. Wm. Macgillivray.\* The bird is said to bear a similar relation to *D. gigas* as the Fawn-breasted Kingfisher (*D. cervina*) does to *D. leachii*.

\* \* \*

**Blue "Budgerigar."**—In the *Avicultural Magazine* (May and June, 1911), Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., deals interestingly with the keeping and breeding of Parrakeets in captivity. Taken as a tribe, Mr. Seth-Smith states, these birds, as a whole, "are hardy, easy to keep, and very showy." He cites an instance of an extremely rare and beautiful variety of blue Warbling Grass-Parrakeet, or "Budgerigar" (*Melopsittacus undulatus*). Mons. Pauwels, a Belgian aviculturist, exhibited a pair in London last year. In this variety the yellow pigment was absent, the bird being of a most beautiful blue, with a pure white face and black bars over the back.

\* See *Agricultural Gazette of New South Wales*, vol. xxii., part 7 (July, 1911), p. 609.

**New Australian Birds.**—In the *Bulletin of the B.O.C.*, No. clxx., Mr. G. M. Mathews describes the following new birds:—*Meliornis nigra dulciei*, from Albany, W.A.; *Acanthiza albiventris hamiltoni*, from New South Wales; *Acanthiza iredalei*, from Lake Way, W.A.; and Mr. Tom Iredale describes as new *Cincloramphus rufescens mathewsi*, from Yalgoo, W.A.

In *Bulletin* No. clxxi. Mr. Mathews describes:—*Piezorhynchus nitidus wardelli*, from Cooktown, North Queensland; *Diaphorillas striatus howei*, from Kow Plains, Victoria; *Myzomela obscura harterti*, from Cairns, North Queensland; *Coracina melanops tasmanica*, from Tasmania; *Artamus tregellasi*, from Rockingham, W.A.; *Butorides rogersi*, from North-West Australia.

In the *Novitates Zoologicae*, vol. xviii., there are described:—*Gerygone albigularis rogersi*, from Derby, North-West Australia (with nest and eggs); *Alisterus cyanopygius minor*, from Cairns, North Queensland; and the eggs of *Poephila personata belcheri*.

\* \* \*

**Bird League at Belltrees.**—In the *Public Instruction Gazette of New South Wales* for 30th June, 1911, is published an interesting article, entitled "How I Formed a Bird League at Belltrees," by Mr. S. A. Hanscombe, who is the teacher at the local public school. Mr. Hanscombe is very enthusiastic, and has the help and advice of Mr. H. L. White, of Belltrees, as well as being able to refer to his magnificent collections and library of ornithological works. He has achieved a signal success in inculcating a love of birds in the young folk of the district. An extract from his article will give an idea of the work accomplished:—"Having obtained the active support of the manager of Belltrees Station, Mr. H. L. White, and other local residents, I drew up the rules for our League, and obtained the signature of each pupil wishing to join. In this course no pressure was used, and none was needed. I admitted children only, as I had by now the active support of all the residents. . . . My task was now a most enjoyable one, as immediately I had the necessary charts drawn out for the wall I had many willing volunteers to subscribe thereon the information they already had. I provided a day-book for miscellaneous notes, and at the end of the week the older pupils would, in turn, take this day-book and enter up all bird notes on the wall charts. Any doubtful notes had to remain over for further observations. The pupils, I found, soon preferred to give their observations orally, and then be questioned on them. I allowed much freedom, and allowed trustworthy boys to bring me two nests and eggs of any species they saw; but I never allowed, on any conditions, a boy to take half a clutch of eggs. By so doing, birds were saved from rearing half-broods, and those whose nests were taken rebuilt and reared full clutches. Two nests and eggs of each species were taken, if possible—one from a green tree and one from a dead tree. Why? To illustrate the wonderful methods Nature devised for protection of nest and

eggs; how in each case the nest suited its location, and how the eggs varied in shades according to their location. The first week we located 42 birds in the locality, and this gradually increased with the return of the migratory birds, and gradually crept onward; and now, after two years, we have reached the grand total of 130 birds in our own locality, with the complete lives of 120 of the species. During the last six months we have only increased our total by six. The League now runs well; and the secretary of our League is a little girl only 12 years of age. I acted as secretary myself for the first year. That I might retain the interest of the pupils, I encourage them to bring pictures and clippings from illustrated papers dealing with bird-life, and these the secretary places in our school scrap-book, always open to the children. Local residents, now appreciating the friendship existing between the children and the birds, often present books and articles on birds to the school library, and I often have the pleasure of roaming the hills and valleys with the children, who are now thorough bird-lovers."

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**Nomenclature of Birds.**—Mr. Gregory M. Mathews has contributed Part II. on this exceedingly technical subject to *Novitates Zoologicae* (vol. xviii., June, 1911). Part I. was mentioned in *The Emu* (*ante*, pp. 46 and 51).

In Part II., as in the previous portions, Mr. Mathews deals almost entirely with Australian birds, but in some cases the generic terms are of more interest to students in general ornithology. In many instances the author has apparently good premises for the establishment of certain names of Australian birds not at present used, but in as many instances it appears to be a matter merely where "doctors differ." For example, the author is "inclined to question the correctness of the ruling of 'Opinions rendered by the International Commission of Zoological Nomenclature'" itself on an important point. Then, with a positive prioretist like Oberholser he (the author) states in another case his (Oberholser's) "decision must be reversed." And, further, still more puzzling are some of Watling's old drawings, with which the late Dr. Sharpe sought to establish the priority in nomenclature of certain Australian birds. Now Mr. Mathews states there is room for doubting the identification of the names given by Sharpe to several of the drawings. Well may Australians ask—"Why rely on the doubtful drawings of a botanist as against the life-like coloured figures of so great an ornithologist and author as Gould?" Bed-rock priority run riot, people are apt to say.

The following may be taken as a sample of Mr. Mathews' research and argument, and how he proposes another name for the Brown-headed Honey-eater (*Melithreptus brevirostris*):—

"Page 92 : Species 741.—*Melithreptus atricapillus*, Latham, 'Suppl. Ind. Orn.', p. xxxvii. (1801), replaces *M. brevirostris*, Vigors and Horsf.

"In *The Ibis*, p. 55, 1906, North advocated the adoption of Latham's *atricapillus* for the bird known as '*lunulatus*,' Shaw. He, however, observed that the distinguishing character of the latter species was not mentioned.

"Sharpe ('Hist. Coll. Brit. Mus.,' ii., p. 128, 1906), from a study of the Watling drawings, independently proposed the rejection of '*lunulatus*,' Shaw, and also preferred *atricapillus* for the species previously known under the former name. The absence of the name-character in the description made me dubious as to the correctness of identifying '*lunulatus*' and *atricapillus*. I therefore have carefully studied the Watling figures, and find that the above alterations are necessary. The figure upon which *atricapillus* was founded is quite a good picture of the bird known as *brevirostris*, Vig. and Horsf. It must be remembered that Latham's descriptions were drawn up from these figures only, and consequently the colour values given by Latham depend entirely upon the artists. In the present instance the figure shows a dark head, which Latham concluded was black; but upon comparing specimens of *brevirostris* and *lunatus* (for such is the name Shaw used), it was seen that the colouration of the figure agreed very well indeed with that of *brevirostris*, whereas it disagreed in many particulars with *lunatus*, which, moreover, was thrice well figured in the same set of drawings, Nos. 129, 130, and 131 (cf. 'Hist. Coll. Brit. Mus.,' ii., p. 132)."

Australians have learned to know this familiar Honey-eater as the "Brown-headed." To call it *atricapillus* (Black-headed), even if it were correct in accordance with strict priority, would be misleading and not according to nature.

\* \* \*

**Tame Wild Birds.** — *The Avicultural Magazine* for July, 1911, contains an interesting account of the wild Lorikeets (*Trichoglossus novæ-hollandiæ*) which Mrs. Ella M. Innes, of Mackay, Queensland, has tamed without depriving them of liberty. The article is in the form of a letter to Mr. D. Seth-Smith, who introduces it with a statement that a photograph of the Lorikeets, by Mr. E. M. Cornwall, appeared in *The Emu*, October, 1910, which led him to write to Mrs. Innes. The reply he received, as published in the *Avicultural Magazine*, is as follows — "Dear Sir,—Your letter of 19th November reached me just as I was leaving home on a visit, so I laid it aside to answer when I could give leisure to it. I enclose one or two of my own photos. of my birds. They do not object to my camera in the very slightest, even at close quarters. I believe my pets are unique in being so thoroughly tamed, yet left in their free state. When we came to this country (17 years ago), while clearing land for cultivation my husband got two young birds from a fallen tree. One was a Blue-bellied Lorikeet (*T. novæ-hollandiæ*) and the other a Scaly-breasted Lorikeet (*T. chlorolepidotus*). He brought them home to me. I reared them and petted them so that we became very fond of them and they of us. They were devoted to me. If I did not appear at the breakfast table they very

soon came round to my bedroom. They kissed me and petted me. They nestled at my neck and used to go to sleep there. Daintier and more affectionate little pets one could not have. If I mourned, they mourned with me; if I were inclined for fun they were as eager for a game as a kitten. They never missed our meal hours, although free to go where they wished. We often used to try and dodge them, taking afternoon tea in different rooms; but they always found out. It was very quaint to see the two looking for us. 'Where are you?' 'Where are you?' they would call, till at last we were discovered. After three years one of them met with an accident and died; the other lived just two weeks longer—it literally died of a broken heart. It used to go about calling 'Where are you?' 'Where are you, my sweet?' but no answering call came. It scarcely left my shoulder during the day, and at night it was so lonely in its cage that I was really glad when it also died one morning in my hand. After that I vowed I would never make such pets of any animal.

"However, one day a little bundle of fluff, and eyes, and beak was brought to me, and I, of course, took it and reared it also. It was a jolly little fellow, and used to have great fun with the cats and dogs. One big cat especially loved a game. He would lie down on his back, and the bird would take a header into the soft fur, and the fun used to be very great as they rolled over and over. The cat would play for a long time with it. How often have I wished I had had a camera in those days of fun and frolic! After I had this one a year, mates came round, and my little fellow could not make up his mind which he would have. He treated all alike, but at last he decided, and then he hunted all the other little flirts most unmercifully. To this favoured one he kept true year after year. They were always together, and brought many families to my care. Now I have so many that I cannot say if he is still true to his first love. We had some very wet weather after he chose his mate, and every evening they had a few words, rather heated at times, over the camp for the night. Jenny wanted to go to the trees, but Joey preferred the comfort of his snug cage. Very often his word was law, and Jenny very shyly dropped into the cage, which was never closed all day, but only during night, as a precaution against wild cats and snakes.

"My family has increased very rapidly. Uncles and aunts, and every possible relative, soon flocked to my table. Seeing no fear in my own birds, they soon got as tame; the pictures show how tame they are. None now sleep in the cage; all sleep in the hollow trees around, but by daylight they clamour for breakfast. They are fond of taking out my hair-pins, as you will see by the photos.

"When I went to town last week there was a girl on the coach behind me. I noticed that she had a tin biscuit-box on her knee, with holes cut in it. I asked her what she had, and, on hearing that it was a bird, I said I hoped it was not one of my Parrots. I gave my usual call, and immediately the answer came from the

tin, and a little eye looked out at a hole. I put my finger in, and the little spongy tongue licked it all over. The girl said she had got it feeding on a lantana bush with others, and it had allowed her to catch it. She would not give it up, and I had no legal right to it. She lives a mile and a half from my home. We live about 20 miles from Mackay, and all the way, every time I spoke to the driver or to the girl, the little voice answered me from the tin. I have asked someone in town to try and buy it back for me from the person to whom the girl gave it. I hope I may get it; I cannot stand my little free pets being caged.

"This is all a ramble, and may be of no interest to you; but Mr. Cornwall seemed to think that, from all he knew of you, it was a letter such as this that would interest. The photos., of course, are rare. In one you will see the spongy tongue sucking up the sweet liquid from the plate, and you will also notice the tails sticking out of the cans, showing that the little gourmands are greedily licking the bottom of the cans. They are noisy little pets, but very beautiful. Their free life keeps their plumage in good order. They are great believers in the daily tub, and there are great scenes of revelry in the spouting round the roof.

"I hope I may revisit England some day before long, and I am sure that I shall want to get inside the Parroquets' cage at the Zoo—that is to say, if I see any of my friends there. I have been away sometimes for four or five months at a time, and during that time my pets are not so well looked after, so they almost stop coming; but I am not home more than two days before the circular has been sent round the tree-tops, and my little friends wing their way from all sides and swarm on me, sometimes 20 or 30 hanging on me and squabbling for the post of honour on my shoulder.

"During the fine weather they do not trouble us beyond coming for food, but in weather such as we are having now (rain daily) they scarcely leave the verandah. As I write I counted over 70 on the wire round the verandah. I had to stop writing to give them food, as they gave me no peace—over my shoulders, drinking the ink, tearing the paper, &c."

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## Reviews.

["Nests and Eggs of Birds Found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania," by Alfred J. North, C.M.Z.S., &c., Ornithologist to the Australian Museum.]

PART II. of vol. iii. of this important work has been published. It contains the remaining portion of the family *Cacatuidæ*, comprising part of the sub-family *Cacatuinæ* and the sub-family *Calopsittacinæ*; the family *Psittacidæ*, containing the sub-families *Palæornithinæ* and *Platycercinæ*, and forming the concluding Australian portion of the order *Psittaci*. As in the previous parts, the illustrations of birds are reproduced from drawings made by

the late Mr. Neville Cayley, who was also responsible for hand-colouring the plates of eggs in the coloured copies. The eggs of the different species of the order *Psittaci* all being white, no plate of birds' eggs is issued with the part. As was mentioned by the reviewers when criticising previous parts, no fault can be found with Mr. North's work except for its "omissions." These omissions are serious stumbling-blocks to students. For instance, no work on the family *Psittacidae* could be complete with the omission of such important Parrots as *Porphyrocephalus spurius* (Red-capped Parrakeet), *Psephotus chrysopterygius* (Golden-shouldered Parrakeet), and *Geopsittacus occidentalis* (Night-Parrakeet). Eggs were described of the first-named by Gould long ago, and more recently (1909) that Parrot was known to breed in captivity in England, and the owner, Mr. Hubert D. Astley, F.Z.S., received the Avicultural Society's medal for same.\* Mr. Astley has contributed an article on the Red-capped Parrakeet to the *Avicultural Magazine* (August, 1911), which has a fine coloured plate of a handsome pair of birds. There are also field notes in *The Emu* (vol. x., pp. 313, 314), by Mr. F. L. Whitlock, of nests taken in the open in Western Australia. And yet Mr. North has remained silent on this splendid species.

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["The Birds of Australia," by A. H. S. Lucas, M.A. (Oxon. and Melb.), B.Sc. (Lond.), &c., and W. H. Dudley Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., M.B.O.U., &c., joint authors of "The Animals of Australia." Little Collins-street, Melbourne; Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin, N.Z.; Addle Hill, Carter-lane, London: Whitcombe and Tombs Limited. 1911.]

An ancient wrote, "Of making many books there is no end," and in these latter days the cry is, "Still they come."

Australia has been fortunate in early colonial days in possessing the great pictorial folios of "The Birds of Australia," by John Gould, with "Handbooks" thereto, and the Commonwealth, in recent years, has been particularly blessed with bird books. A conspicuous trio has just been published—one in course of publication—(1) "An Australian Bird Book," by Mr. J. A. Leach, which was noticed in *The Emu*, p. 348; (2) "The Birds of Australia" (the volume at present under review), by Messrs. A. H. S. Lucas and Dudley Le Souëf; and (3) Mr. Gregory Mathews' classical undertaking, "The Coloured Figures of the Birds of Australia," of which three parts of vol. i. have been delivered to subscribers. These three works in no way clash, but form a distinct and natural sequence of inestimable value to a nation of bird-lovers, such as Australians—the rising generation, at all events—are becoming.

Regarding "The Birds of Australia," the joint authors, Messrs. Lucas and Le Souëf, have put a coping-stone on their work and

\* *Avic. Mag.*, ser. 2, vol. vii., p. 291.



Nest of Rufous Bristle-Bird (*Sphenura broadbenti*).

FROM A PHOTO BY A. J. CAMPBELL.



Honey-eaters Feeding, Flight Aviary, Zoological Gardens, Melbourne.

FROM A PHOTO. BY D. LE SOUËF ("BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA," LUCAS AND LE SOUËF).



Pheasant Coucal (*Centropus phasianus*), Zoological Gardens, Sydney.

FROM A PHOTO. ("BIRDS OF AUSTRALIA," LUCAS AND LE SOUËF.)

life as field naturalists, and have made a high-water mark, for years, at least, to come, in a most useful and concise ornithological reference. There is enough of the purely technical side to give the book a sound standing, while there is a sufficiency of popular matter to please. The classification followed is that of the late Dr. Bowdler Sharpe, as contained in his "Hand-list of Birds," and the joint authors state:—"We gladly acknowledge our deep indebtedness to the various authors of the magnificent series of descriptive catalogues published by the authorities of the British Museum."

The work is liberally illustrated with half-tone photo-blocks of birds, nests, and bird scenes, mostly excellent, whether considered technically, ornithologically, or artistically. Three selected blocks are given with this review by courtesy of the publishers (Plates XI. and XII.) Several of the subjects first appeared in this journal, and have been fully acknowledged. A few of the illustrations, notably those of some of the sea-bird scenes, are so nearly alike as to be practically duplicates. This loss of space might have been devoted with advantage to other subjects requiring figures. The volume is further illuminated by four artistic coloured plates of bird groups, reproduced from paintings by Mrs. Ellis Rowan, a cousin of one of the authors.

Of course, the authors do not claim perfection, and advanced students may consider that here and there are slight errors of omission and commission, which, however, do not exceed the law of average for a work of its class.

The printer's share of the work is also admirable, and well sustains the reputation of the enterprising publishers, Messrs. Whitcombe and Tombs Limited. The cost of the volume, one guinea, is reasonable.

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[*"My Tropic Isle,"* by E. J. Banfield. T. Fisher Unwin, London, W.C.]

SEQUELS are proverbially unsatisfactory, but no reader of "The Confessions of a Beachcomber" will be disappointed with Mr. Banfield's new volume, which contains a further instalment of romance and delightful nature notes. Dunk Island, since its Crusoe revealed its charms to the world, has become as familiar, by name, at least, as Stevenson's "Treasure Island." And some who read of it come seeking treasure on Mr. Banfield's tropic isle, deeming that no sane man would dwell upon it save for the purpose of winning wealth from hidden minerals. But Mr. Banfield's confessions reveal the secret. A lover of nature, quietness, and reflection, he finds Dunk Island admirably suited for the life he joys in living. He settled there with his wife in September, 1897, and after 14 years' residence is still charmed with his island domain. The first portion of "My Tropic Isle" is a kind of "Journal Intimé"—a mingled web of poetry, philosophy, and fancy. Mr. Banfield's prose is clean-cut and pliant. He reminds

one a little of Stevenson, and again of Hudson and Thoreau. His chapter on "Silences" is delicately wrought and as "soothing as the perfume of violets."

The volume contains a great deal about fruits and flowers, and several chapters are devoted to marine life. Bird-life is dealt with in Chapters xix., xx., and xxi., under the captions "Intelligent Birds," "Swifts and Eagles," and "Socialistic Birds" respectively. The Koel (*Eudynamis cyanocephala*) forms the subject of a discursive essay, which should be read for its picture of the Cuckoo as a scout. "Do birds play?" asks Mr. Banfield, and proceeds to describe the actions of two young Cassowaries (*Casuarius australis*) which playfully performed martial exercises. The birds were wont to stride about a stout post, lurch against it, and, feigning fury, lash out at the piece of wood with unrestrained violence. Anecdotes of a clever Red-collared Lorikeet, which played the game of stalking with a yellow cat, and of a Scrub-Fowl that laid her eggs in a space between two horizontal slabs of granite—a natural incubator—are given, and there are many interesting notes regarding the Nutmeg-Pigeon and the nesting habits of the Shining Calornis.

A small colony of the Grey-rumped Swiftlet (*Collocalia francica*) exists on Dunk Island, and Mr. Banfield has studied the birds closely. The nests are situated in a cave on one of the highest points of the island, being fastened to the roof by "a semi-transparent white substance resembling isinglass," with which also the materials composing them—fine grass, moss, and fibre—are consolidated. The Swiftlet lays a single white egg, and the breeding season extends over 4 months, the earliest date on which a newly-laid egg was discovered being 14th October. As far as Mr. Banfield has observed, the birds never rest save in the cave, clinging to the nests or to the roof. They do not utter a note "except the reassuring prattle upon alighting on the edge of the nest."

"My Tropic Isle" is a delightful chronicle of island life—a book to possess, not to borrow. It should be added the volume is well printed and bound, and contains a number of half-tone illustrations reproduced from photographs.

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## Correspondence.

### NOMENCLATURE OF AUSTRALIAN AVIFAUNA.

To the Editors of "*The Emu*."

SIRS,—I have read with considerable interest Mr. Gregory M. Mathews' letter in the last issue of *The Emu* (pp. 52-58), relative to the nomenclature of the Australian avifauna.

Before commenting upon the letter, I desire, as one deeply