them were perched close together in the top of a low sapling, my attention being again attracted by the sound Woof, woof, whilst I was cycling along. The bird, when found sitting as described, does not take fright easily, and, although the pair of birds seen at Euroa was flushed from the trees several times, no attempt was made to return to the tree flushed from, to settle upon the ground, or to volplane as they did after the first time of taking flight.

Undoubtedly, the peculiar and circular flights of *P. phasianella* at dusk on the evening of 5th June, 1914, were controlled by an impulse to return each time to the tree and branch they had selected as a roosting-place for the night. Possibly it is a characteristic of this bird to return, if disturbed after having settled down for the night, to the tree selected for roosting in.

Morning Song of the Noisy Miner (Myzantha garrula).

BY ROBERT HALL, C.M.B.O.U., C.M.Z.S., R.A.O.U., HOBART.

THAT very common bird, the Noisy Miner, is without credit for its morning song—a psalm of dawn. Rather, we incline to ridicule it for the poverty of music in its notes. They are mostly calls or alarms. That is true with regard to its life between sunrise and sunset. To my great surprise, an agreeable phase of this bird's life-history has shown itself. Before sunrise, and as the day breaks, a solitary bird, judging by the general quiet, will pour forth for twenty minutes a most agreeable song in its nesting area. It is a song of short phrases, and not as continuous as that of the Skylark (*Alauda*) in the day-time or of the Bush-Lark (*Mirafra*) in the moonlight, or by the Reed-Warbler (*Acrocephalus*) within its bed of reeds. The song of the Black-and-White Fantail (*Rhipidura motacilloides*), made up of five notes, is very simple when compared, and is practically at the opposite pole to that of *Alauda* or *Mirafra*. So even and so sweet is the calm of the song that it certainly is not one of rivalry. There is no flight in song as with *Mirafra*, and it is too much in the dark for display of plumage. The phrases have intervals of a few seconds, and they are very simple. The two liquid notes rendered as Ko-tek remind me of the contralto notes of the Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*).

The rendering given of this song of dawn is to be taken as correct with latitude. The bird itself on different mornings will make its variations, both in pitch and in the order of the phrases, and our musical notation does not yet seem possible for bird song.

On 1st October, just when the first of the daylight came along, and when birds and animals in general were asleep, in a perfectly calm air a voice broke the stillness, clearly and crisply, with Ko-tek, ko-tek, ko-tek. With an interval of three seconds

the following highly-pitched notes most surely broke into the morning :—We-we, we-we, we-we, we-we. With a brief rest of another three seconds the singer of these high and sweet notes from the same position sent forth four liquid notes—Pick-up, pick-up.

At this time our Tasmanian Magpie, *Gymnorhina organicum*, finding himself to be awake, contributed his series of organ-like notes. I think the carol of the Magpie is eclipsed by the song of the Miner, generally referred to as the plainest of plain birds—the "common Delft" of the feathered world. By the finding of this song in our district, I feel as if I had unearthed a thing of rare beauty, open to the public between the hours of 5 and 5.20 a.m. in the spring of the year.

As more light came in so less song came out. What impressed me was the absence of nearly all the day notes—the common notes—the whole being a long series of different bars rendered in fairly regular order to get effect.

It was on the following morning that I hoped to be awake to get a record of this really happy outburst. I was fortunate in the following result :—

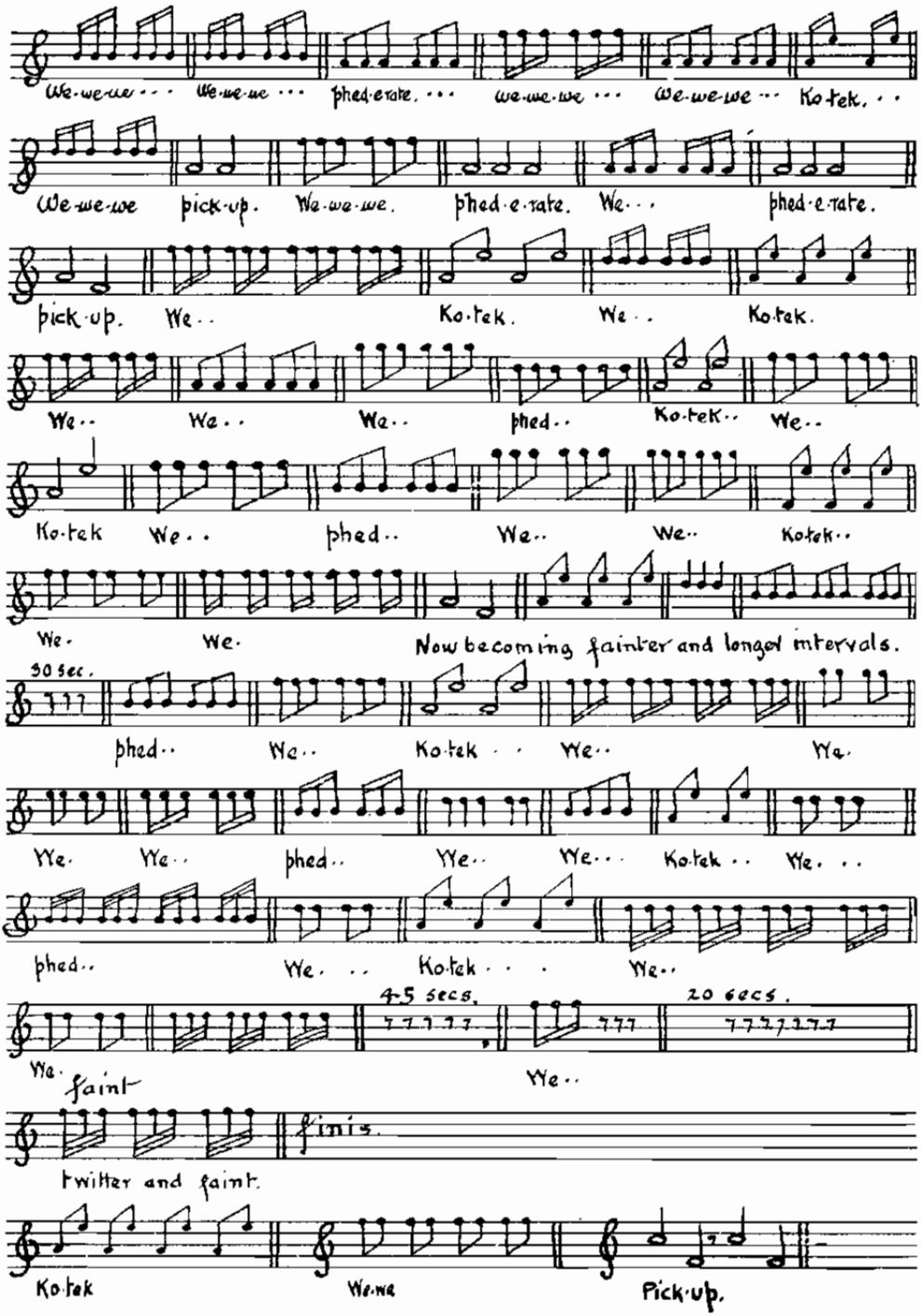
2nd Oct., 1915, 5.4 a.m.; morning calm and fine; locality, Bellerive, Hobart; the position as yesterday, and doubtless the same male bird nesting in the garden near the window of my dressing-room sang (see plate). Now followed a long interval and silence, except for the Tasmanian Magpie's voice, which is rather like the tuning of a 'cello; inferior to that of the Victorian species, and superior to that of the Western Australian form.

The silence of the Miner continued to 5.50 a.m., when it gave the first of its daylight calls—the well-known and unmelodious thin and reedy querulous notes. A second long silence followed up to 7.5 a.m., when the interval was terminated by another series of day-time notes—Peep-peep, peep-peep. The morning song had lasted just twenty minutes.

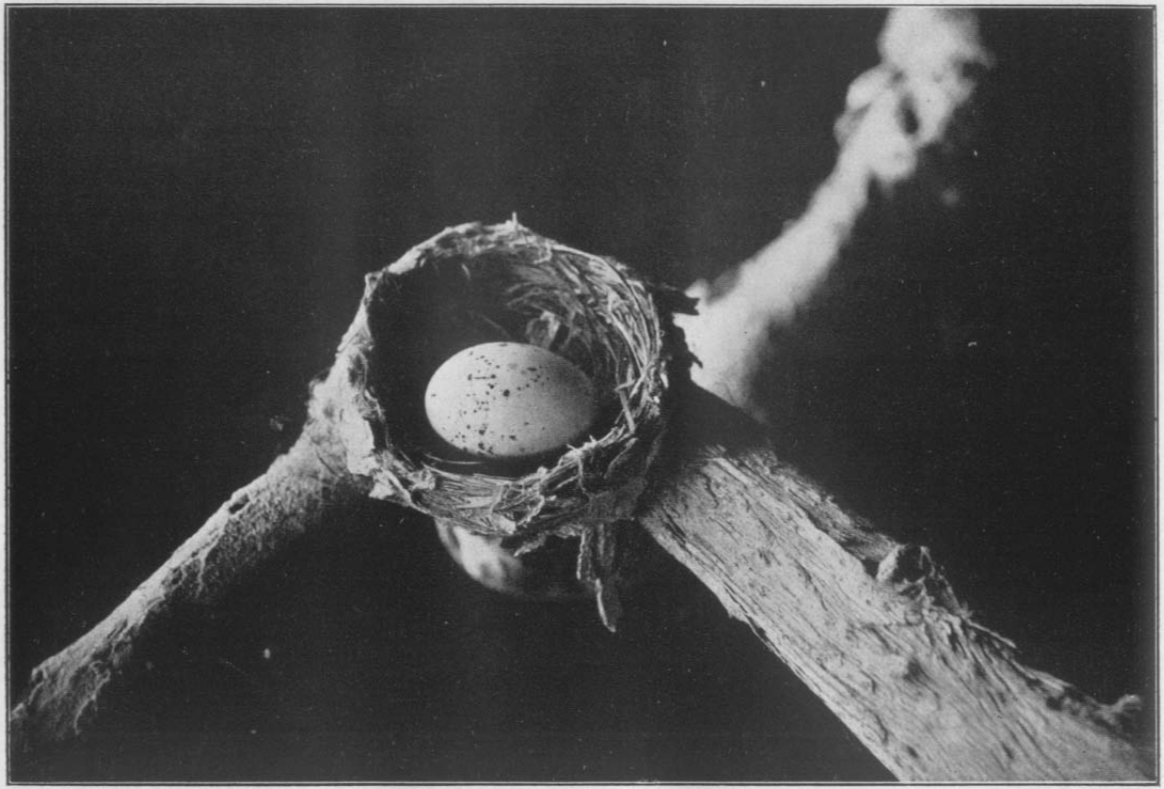
3rd Oct., 5.3 a.m., was the opening time of the second observation. The complete time of the song was eighteen minutes. The first phase started with a low, indefinite note to lead the We-we on its way—approximately Tche-we-we. The We-wes are subject to regular variation of pitch, though every note of the phrase is the same as the first. It is this variation that helps the agreeable effect. Near the conclusion the Tek of Ko-tek had a lengthened accent upon it, and the notes of the Ko-tek had the same pitch. Between 5.13 and 5.18 a.m. the intervals became wider. Between 5.18 and 5.21 there was no interval. The five notes immediately following were very faint. These were the last of what I certainly feel was its most definite and interesting psalm of dawn. The phrases throughout the first two-thirds had fairly regular intervals.

The sounds in order from first to last were :—Tche-we-we; ko-tek, ko-tek, ko-tek, ko-tek (with slight variation); phed-e-rate;

PLATE XXVIII.



Noisy Miner's Morning Song.



Nest and Egg of Yellow-breasted Flycatcher.

FROM A PHOTO. BY A. J. CAMPBELL.

ko-tek (four notes), we-we (four times repeated); we-we (four times); we-we (four times, pitch altered); phed-e-rate (twice); we-we (four times); ko-tek (twice); we-we (four times), phed-e-rate (twice); we-we (twice); we-we (four times), ko-tek (four times); we-we (three times); we-we (four times, at much higher pitch); ko-tek (four times); we-we (four times); we-we (four times), and ko-tek (once) and we-we (four times), all quickly followed; interval of several seconds; we-we (eight times); ko-tek (once); we-we (four times, pitched high); we-we (four, medium pitch); interval of several seconds; ko-tek; phed-e-rate (four times); piek-up (same value); we-we (three times); intervals were becoming wider, with last few notes faint, 5.21 a.m.

Nothing further was heard till 7.5 a.m., when the first of the day calls was given—a series of six sharp, twittering notes.

The *Grallina*-like notes were particularly interesting because if by imitation they must be by inheritance, as we have no *Grallina* in or near this district. The nearest *Myzantha garrula* was approximately 400 yards away, and on one occasion only did I hear that or any other of its species giving notes of its song. In other words, the male bird was the only singer in the area allotted to a pair of birds at this season of the year.

Mr. Giblin, M.H.A., tells me that Miners sing in chorus; that in the stillness of early morning one bird will strike its first clear, sweet, and strong call, when promptly follow a number of its companions, as if to vie with each other in the pure joy of living another day. Without knowing the fact, I should incline to believe this chorus to be a song of the early part of spring, before the birds have paired and become isolated for nesting.

Camera Craft Notes.

Two Northern Nests.—The nest of the Lemon-breasted Flycatcher (*Microeca flavigaster*) is one of the smallest of those of Australian birds. The structure is about the circumference of a half-crown, and is the receptacle of a single egg. The pretty bird is fairly plentiful in the tropics of Queensland, where it seems to take the place of our familiar friend the Brown Flycatcher (*M. fascinans*) of the south. The nest of the White-breasted Honey-eater (*Glyciphila fasciata*) was taken from a paper-barked tea-tree, or *Melaleuca*, near where some "tea-tree" orchids were growing. The nest was suspended over a lily lagoon, and was constructed of shreds and strips of tea-tree bark, and is dome-shaped. The Brown-backed Honey-eater (*G. modesta*) is the only other Honey-eater known to build a covered nest; those of all the rest of the family are open.

I am indebted to the Messrs. Harvey Bros., Mackay, for the two interesting nests which I have illustrated.—A. J. CAMPBELL. Armadale, 15/11/15.