

leaves beneath the banyans and palms, or the gentle song of the introduced Silvereye, and perhaps the tinkling chromatic melody of the Gerygone from the trees around the tent. In the heat of the day the scolding notes of the gaudy Sacred Kingfisher were always heard, especially when a person approached its nest. Then in the evenings, just before dusk had brought the scores of Shearwaters to their burrows, the loud, pleasant whistling call of the Pied Currawong would ring out from the hills at the back of the camp and be answered by others in the forest as if the birds were carrying on a conversation, while Sooty Terns, passing overhead would cry to one another "wide-awake, wide-awake." Perhaps the Whistler (*Pachycephala*) would sound its evening song, and, finally, when darkness fell, the moaning of the Shearwaters and the shrill, attractive notes of the Golden Plover in the paddocks would serve to remind us that in spite of the lurking menace of the rats, Lord Howe Island was still a place of more than ordinary interest to the ornithologist.

Chestnut-breasted Shelduck (*Casarca tadornoides*).—Was Herodotus right when he spoke of the Ostrich burying its head in the sand at the approach of danger? One October afternoon a friend and I were travelling between Hexham and Caramut, when we noticed a pair of Mountain Ducks or Chestnut-breasted Shelducks with a brood of five or six ducklings near a pool some twelve or fifteen yards across. When we approached, the old birds uttered a warning call and flew off, the young ones taking to the water. There they dived like experts for the next ten minutes. Soon we noticed the number getting smaller until only two were in sight. We discovered two at last crouched at the water's edge. At the other side of the pool I saw one crouched between two or three stones. As I came into view, his black, beady eye discerned me and he showed considerable agitation, as well he might, for he was wholly in view. Then seeing a gap between two of the stones, he lifted his head and thrust it between the stones so that his head was almost hidden, while his neck and body were still in full view. Immediately his agitation disappeared, and he settled down quite comfortably, not, be it noted, in that immobile crouched pose assumed by young Plover, Dotterel or Duck, where the body lies flat with head and neck stretched straight ahead and as near the ground as possible. No, once his head was hidden, he lost all vestige of fear, apparently under the impression that, as he could not see me, therefore I could not see him. And, I ask again—Was Herodotus right after all?—C. SULLIVAN, M.B., B.S., Warrnambool.