

graceful planing, and pirouetting their fully expanded tails. With their dusky and white plumage and agile movements they reminded one of the perpetual motion of the Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura flabellifera*). Later in the day the Currawongs are almost silent and appear to make their way back to their sleeping quarters in the hills, to repeat much the same programme again next day. These birds were in this district during the autumn of 1925. Old residents state they have occasional recollections of them in the past. This autumnal nomadic habit is probably the manner in which the species finds suitable haunts in new districts and so increases the area of its habitat. It is undoubtedly a newer form of *Strepera* than *S. versicolor*, whose haunts it invades and overlaps. Coming right down the coastal belts from Cape York to Wilson's Promontory, it then turns westwards and is found in the Baw Baw Ranges, in the Otway Forest, the Pyrenees, and in the Grampians. In the last-named mountains it is a very common bird indeed. But this is its furthest west, because the flat sparsely timbered country beyond appears to impose a barrier to further extension. It is quite possible, however, that some fine autumn, under the influence of a good season or some other more local circumstance, a party of Pied Currawongs may make the journey across to South Australia.—A. G. CAMPBELL, J.P., Kilsyth, Vic.

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## Reviews

[The Birds of the Malay Peninsula, Vol. II.: The Birds of the Hill Stations. By H. C. Robinson, late Director of Museums, Fed. Malay States. (Witherby, London.) 35/-.]

This volume is devoted to the birds known to inhabit or visit the mountain region, which lies more or less in the central portion of the peninsula. For this purpose 2500 feet above sea level is taken as the line which excludes typical lowland birds. Above this are found strictly montane species, including all races of birds that are peculiar to the Malay Peninsula, these, however, being allied to birds inhabiting similar altitudes in Sumatra and Borneo.

This arrangement is novel but of considerable ecological value as indicating what may be the older types of bird life. Such families as Frogmouths, Hoopoes, Starlings and Grackles are absent, while Hornbills, Barbets, Woodpeckers, Bulbuls and other birds which do not cross to the east of the Wallace line are well represented. Besides, there are families like Bee-eaters, Pittas, Drongos, White-eyes, Flower-peckers and Sunbirds, which are known in the Australasian region by a few representatives only.

Each species is succinctly dealt with under sub-headings, but it is admitted that "nidification" in numerous cases is yet unknown. Useful keys to the colouration of the birds are given, and the work is well illustrated by a map and twenty-five excellent coloured plates.

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[Birds and Green Places: A book of Australian nature gossip. By A. H. Chisholm, R.A.O.U., C.F.A.O.U. (J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd.). Price, 15/- nett.]

To say of Mr. Chisholm's new book that it is a companion volume to his *Mateship with Birds* is to fail to do it justice. *Birds and Green Places* is more aspiring, and embraces a number of varied subjects in a pleasant manner that brings one to a profound realisation of the interesting avine beauties of our land. Mr. Chisholm has always stressed the æsthetic side of ornithology, and the artistic descriptions in his latest book are well flavoured with that ingredient. We can visualize from his charming descriptions the places and incidents described. We are taken with him the length and breadth of Queensland—from the dense jungles of the Macpherson Range where dwells that *rara avis* the Rufous Scrub Bird, to the western plains, north to Dunk Island, the home of the Beachcomber, and back again to that "bountiful island of sand," Fraser Island.

Through the medium of Mr. Chisholm's facile pen there is made available much valuable information regarding some of our rarest of birds—the Paradise and Ground Parrots, and the Grey Swiftlets that frequent the caverns of Dunk Island. There are two delightful chapters dealing with those "most extraordinary birds," Bower Birds. The author has manifestly studied these birds in their native haunts to great advantage, and has given us in his book the benefit of his observations. These remarkable birds, he points out, are noted architects, actors, and even artists, for they often "paint" their bowers with some kind of vegetable dye. These tendencies are in his opinion a clear indication militating against the "anatomical dictum" that most of the Bower Birds are unrelated. All Bower Birds, he considers, had a common ancestor in which the virus of æstheticism was implanted, and inherited instinct has extended and developed through the ages to produce our present bower builders.

Mention must be made of Jacob—a representative of that species which has decreased so steadily before the advance of civilization, the Bustard—who was "given to swallowing snakes and biting parsons." Other subjects dealt with are the swarming of the Wood-swallows, seeking rare parrots, the elfin Warblers (*Gerygone*), and a deal of information

regarding that prince of mocking birds, the Lyrebird. In this matter of mimicry also the Bower Birds are well to the fore.

The book is splendidly illustrated with 50 pages of excellent photographs with two coloured plates and a map, and contains a comprehensive index. Mr. Chisholm's book is of value both for its wealth of scientific ornithology, and for its general appeal fragrant with the beauty of the green places that it tells about.

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## Obituary

In a recent issue of the London *Times* the death is announced of Mr. Herbert C. Robinson, author of a fine work on the Birds of the Malay Peninsula. Mr. Robinson was born in Liverpool on November 4, 1874, and was educated at Marlborough where he was unable to finish his studies owing to ill-health. When quite young he started on a collecting trip to New Guinea, but illness detained him in Queensland, and he was compelled to return to England without reaching New Guinea. After working for some time in conjunction with Dr. H. O. Forbes at the Museum in Liverpool, he visited the Malay States and later accepted the Directorship of Museums, Federated Malay States. While there he did the most important work of his life. He remained in the East from 1910 to 1920, when he made a short visit to England. In 1924 he was again in England in charge of the Malay workers at Wembley. He remained in England for two years. In 1926 he retired from the Civil Service and at once set about preparing a comprehensive account of the birds of Malay Peninsula. Of the five proposed volumes only two have been published, and a third was almost completed when illness caused him to leave London. He subsequently died in a nursing home at Oxford early in June. It is matter of much regret that Mr. Robinson was not spared to complete his work, as he had an unrivalled knowledge of the birds of the Malay States. In 1900 he contributed to the *Ibis* the results of his examination of a collection of skins from North Queensland.

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At the close of his second term as President of the R.A.O.U. comes news of the death of Mr. A. J. Campbell, who died on September 11, 1929, following a long illness. Actually his last work—the presidential address for next Congress—was laid on the table at the Council meeting the evening before his death. While the sympathy of the Union goes out to those bereaved by this sad loss, it is intended to hold over an obituary until next issue, when a fitting tribute can be paid to this great worker on Australian ornithology.