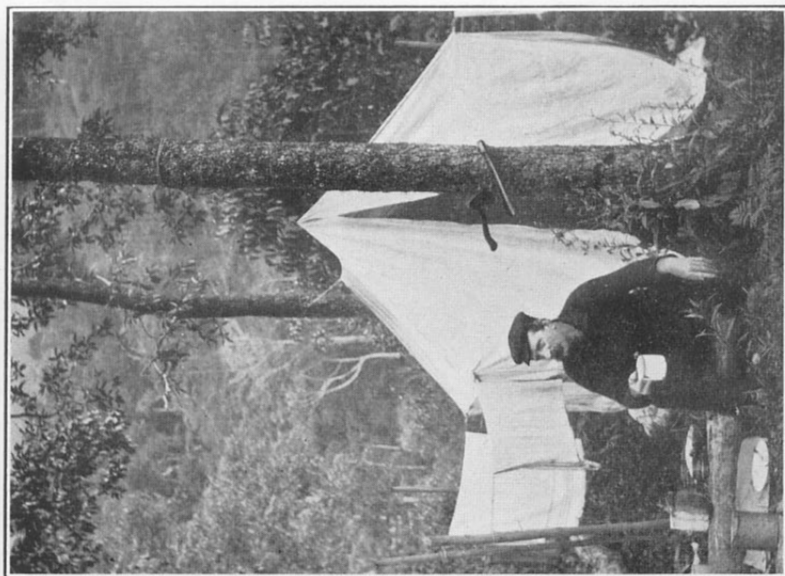


The late E. M. Cornwall.



E. M. Cornwall in camp at the foot of the
Eungela Ranges.

Obituary

E. M. CORNWALL

Edward Mayler Cornwall, one of the foundation members of the R.A.O.U., died in Mackay, Queensland, on November 24, 1937.

Born in Malvern, Victoria, on May 10, 1861, Cornwall became interested in natural history at a very early age. When only in his 'teens he became a member of the first scientific expedition to visit King Island, in the Bass Straits. The expedition was planned by the Victorian Field Naturalists Club, to ascertain as precisely as possible the fauna and flora indigenous to the island, before the introduction of numerous foreign plants and animals rendered it impossible to do so. The party number twenty-six, including sportsmen, ornithologists, entomologists, botanists, conchologists, while Cornwall filled the dual post of oologist and taxidermist. For the time being, all were transformed into collectors of anything which might throw light upon the living inhabitants (both animal and plant) of the island. The first two days' work amongst the birds revealed very clearly the fact that the scientists were on ground peculiarly Tasmanian and not Victorian. Further research amongst the higher forms of animal life only served to strengthen this conclusion. Thus, for example, the birds taken on one day included the Scrub-Tit of Tasmania, the Yellow-throated Honeyeater and the Strong-billed Honeyeater, the Gang-Gang Cockatoo of Tasmania and Victoria, and others. The Golden-headed Grass-Warbler was remarkable as being the solitary bird secured upon the island which is found in Victoria—but not met with in Tasmania.

Along the shore the party found five "porcupines," or echidnas—the lowest and in some respects most interesting of mammalia. It was interesting to note that the echidnas were the hairy form of Tasmania.

In the early 'eighties, Cornwall went to the far north of Queensland on a scientific collecting trip, and stayed there for several years, during which time he made a collection of 10,000 bird skins and many thousands of clutches of birds' eggs, including some first sets of little-known species. Some of the birds collected by him proved to be new to science, and at least one form (*Podargus cornwalli*) bears his name. This is, of course, classed as sub-specific to *P. strigoides*. In those early times, Cairns was little better than a mangrove swamp, and in his diary Cornwall describes the roads as "diabolical quagmires." He made extensive journeys on horseback, visiting Port Douglas and the Mossman River country before the advent of sugar-cane. Many a time he was obliged to swim a flooded creek, and spend a night in the damp, tropical rain-forest when lost in the wilds.

Having accomplished his task, Cornwall returned to his native State, but did not stay long. The magic spell of the tropical North was in his blood, and when the migratory birds went north in the fall, he packed up his belongings and followed suit. His first venture brought him to Townsville, where he met a young English lady who later became his wife. He then went to Cairns as manager of the Red Arcade, and remained in that place for several years. He was instrumental in forming the Field Naturalists Club of Cairns, and became the first president of that society. Subsequently, he was appointed to the managership of Messrs. Shaw and Son's business in Mackay, which position he occupied until the date of his retirement.

In his earlier years, Cornwall contributed several articles to *The Emu*, and many of his articles were published in other papers under the pen-name of "Mopoke."

After retiring from business, he developed a latent talent for lecturing, and his bird lectures were always a prominent feature of the bird-day movement in Mackay. Cornwall was a keen amateur photographer, evincing a genius for bird-studies, and wherever he went he always used his camera as a means of perpetuating the memories of his ramblings in the vast realm of nature. His fine series of wild-life studies taken on the Barrier Reef and elsewhere have definitely placed him in the front rank of Australian nature photographers.

Cornwall represented Queensland on the Council of the R.A.O.U. for several years, and also held the office of State secretary for Queensland.

He is survived by his wife and one adopted daughter, and several grand-children.—W. G. HARVEY.

Stray Feathers

***Pterodroma macroptera* in Western Australia.**—The note in the last number of this journal by Mr. C. Allen in which he gives us information regarding a breeding site of this species off the south coast of Western Australia, is more valuable than the appearance of the note would indicate. Actually Mr. Allen's information is the first we have on the nesting habits of this form, which Gregory Mathews named *P. m. albani* in 1912—"Additions and Corrections to My Reference List to the Birds of Australia" (*Aust. Av. Rec.*, 1, p. 30).

The first record of this species from Western Australia was on April 2, 1905, when Mr. G. C. Shortridge collected two female specimens on Rabbit Island, King George's Sound. His collections were "written up" five years later by the late W. R. Ogilvie-Grant, then in charge of the bird collection in the British Museum, in *The Ibis*, 9th series, vol. III, October, 1909, and January, 1910. He recorded only sex, date of collection, colour of soft parts, and some