

Rosetta or Rosella Parrots?

By J. D. SOMERVILLE, King's Park, Adelaide, S.A.

Just over two years ago the writer discussed the above question (*Emu*, 42, 13). The argument was based on a letter dated October 27, 1838, wherein Edward Stephens for the South Australian Company advised the London Office that a quantity of bird specimens had been despatched to London, among them being '3 Rosetta Parrotts [sic].' It was also shown that the earliest printed use of the vernacular 'Rosella' was in Leichhardt's *Journal of an Overland Expedition in Australia* (1847), and that John Gilbert in his MS. diary had used the word in 1844-5.

It is now to be recorded that Surgeon R. G. Jameson, in his book *New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales: A Record of Recent Travels in these Colonies . . .* (1842), used the word 'Rosella.' Jameson arrived in South Australia on the ship *Surrey* on October 11, 1838, and remained until February, 1839. After leaving South Australia he visited Java, Singapore and Calcutta (p. 96), arriving in New South Wales about September, 1839. In November, 1839, he went to New Zealand (p. 175), and returned to New South Wales about January, 1840 (p. 201). He revisited New Zealand in March, 1840 (p. 227). It is probable that he left New Zealand in October, 1840 (p. 277). He was at Parramatta towards the end of 1840 (p. 153) and left Sydney in November, 1840 (p. 136).

During his four months' sojourn in South Australia he made at least two excursions into the country—one to the Mount Barker district and the other to Yorke Peninsula. Of the latter excursion he recorded his experiences in the *South Australian Gazette and Colonial Register* (of December 8, 1838), and of the former in his published book, wherein he refers to the white and black cockatoos, after which he wrote (p. 71): "These woodland solitudes are also enlivened by the ceaseless twittering of paroquets, which, like the cockatoo tribes, live in large societies. Of these, the Blue Mountain paroquet, the rosella, and the lory, are the most beautiful."

It is most probable that Jameson's Mount Barker excursion took place about the time or shortly after the South Australian Company's letter was despatched to England.

The use of the vernacular 'Rosella' for the South Australian bird is interesting. Jameson may have been a naturalist, but any avian knowledge he possessed did not lead him to use scientific names for birds. In places, however, he used scientific names for grasses and trees. Although Jameson made several visits to Parramatta he makes no reference to any birds seen there. In fact, he makes no reference to birds seen in New South Wales, but he advised newly-arrived settlers to visit the Museum so

as to become acquainted with birds and animals they were likely to meet in the land of their adoption.

The writer cannot see that this new information alters the previous conclusion. All that it does is to carry the printed use of the vernacular 'Rosella' back five years. 'Rosetta' has still at least two years' priority in print.

The Grey Plover

By A. R. MCGILL, Arncliffe, N.S.W.

On August 19, 1944, and again the following day, I observed a single Grey Plover (*Squatarola squatarola*), which was presumably the same bird on each occasion, on the tidal-flats at the Cook's River estuary, Botany Bay, New South Wales. As I was able to secure a good plumage description with the aid of a telescope, publication of the details may be of interest. On the first occasion bad light, drizzling rain and strong wind made observation difficult, and I was not sure of identification, but on the following day conditions were ideal, except for a certain degree of restlessness shown by the bird. Notes compiled at the time read as follows: "General outline, size, stance, actions and feeding habits, closely similar to those of the Golden Plover; over-all upper plumage, mid-grey with darker grey markings on the crown and down the middle of the back, and a very noticeable whitish (or much lighter shade of grey) shoulder-patch which showed up more conspicuously from a distance; tips of primaries, brownish, and when resting these appear to cover the tail; underparts, white; indistinct whitish eyebrow; bill, black, heavy (stout and fairly short in comparison) and, in consequence, rather prominent; legs and feet, greyish-black; entire rump and tail shows white in flight, but the tail-tip appears to have a light grey wash; when it rises in flight and immediately before alighting the tail is spread wide and fan-shaped, each feather being discernible and showing a gap between them; underwing, white with black axillary feathers which are very striking in flight and somewhat resemble a hole through the bird's body." Continued observation of the bird was possible and it was watched through the telescope in flight on three occasions.

The only noticeable part of this plumage description, which apparently has not been detailed previously, is the whitish shoulder-patch. Concerning it, Dr. D. L. Serventy has stated (*in litt.*, Sep. 26, 1944)—"I have not noticed the light-coloured shoulder-patch . . . you may have got on to an individual variant." However, it was clearly noticeable and was the most conspicuous plumage item noted when endeavouring to obtain a clue to its identity despite the trying conditions on the first day. In view of the early date, the bird had probably just acquired its eclipse or