is not so dark in the female. The buff colouring on portions of the under surface of the latter is, however, richer, and encompasses more of the abdomen, than in the male.

Locality.—Day Dawn, Murchison.

Types in Western Australian Museum, Perth.

From Magazines, &c.

IN *The Wombat* (December, 1902) Mr. F. C. Belcher, of Geelong, contributes numerous chatty field notes on birds observed during a three days' holiday taken at the end of September in the woodlands south of his city. The usual familiar forest birds were met with, but near Jan Juc, close to the edge of the coastal ranges, the Whiteface (*Xerophila leucopsis*), a more inland species, was seen breeding.

* * *

AMONG the interesting additions to the Zoological Gardens (London) were four hybrids between the Rosella and Pale-headed Parrakeets (*Platycercus eximius* and *P. pallidiceps*) and two hybrids between the Golden-shouldered and Many-coloured Parrakeets (*Psephotus chrysopterygius* and *P. multicolor*).—*Avic. Mag.* (February, 1903).

* * *

ORNITHOLOGICAL students will do well to consult *The Avicultural Magazine* for March, 1903. It contains a concisely written article (with plates) by Mr. W. P. Pycraft, M.B.O.U., &c., on "The Topography of a Bird," with an up-to-date glossary. Technical terms to a general reader are foolishness, but in a scientific description of a bird are simply indispensable.

* * *

IN part 3, vol. xxvii., *Proceedings Linnean Society N.S.W.* (issued 16th December, 1902), Mr. A. J. North has furnished descriptions of the nest and eggs of the scarce Buff-sided Robin (*Pœcilodryas cerviniventris*) from the Northern Territory, from specimens loaned by Mr. Charles French, jun., of Melbourne. Similar specimens from the same locality were described by the hon. sec. of the Aust. O.U. (Mr. D. Le Souëf) in the October (1902) number of the *The Emu*, vol. ii., p. 89.

* * *

IN *The Proceedings of the Linnean Society of N.S.W.*, vol. xxvii. (issued 17th October, 1902, page 207) Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., has described the eggs of the Fly-catchers *Sisura nana** and *Rhipidura dryas*. He also contributes a note on the Long-tailed Grass-Finch (*Poephila acuticauda*), pointing out that the species from Port Darwin and Wyndham

* The description of this new egg has been anticipated by a few days only by Mr. D. Le Souëf—*vide* page 89 October part, vol. ii.

possess *orange-scarlet* bills, while those from the lower region of Derby have *pale wax-yellow* bills, which comes nearest the description furnished by Gould. The former variety Mr. North proposes to distinguish under the name of *P. aurantiirostris*, or in the vernacular the Orange-billed Grass-Finch.

* * *

REGARDING the Red-crowned Lorikeet Gould wrote :—" Could this species be transmitted to Europe, and a kind of food suitable to it be discovered, it would form one of the most delightful cage-pets that has ever been introduced." Gould's old time question has been recently answered. According to *The Avicultural Magazine* (January, 1903) a small consignment of the pretty little Varied or Red-crowned Lorikeet (*Ptilosclera versicolor*), which inhabits chiefly Northern Australia, has lately reached England—no doubt, the first living examples of this interesting species ever taken to that country.

* * *

MISS ROSIE ANDERSON, writing in *The Avicultural Magazine* (January, 1903) regarding her *Ocyphaps lophotes* in England, states :—" My pair of Crested Pigeons had at one time a perfect mania for sitting—and sitting well—on other Doves' eggs. Nor were they content with one nest, but *each* took a separate one. At last I took them away and gave them a little aviary to themselves, and here they brought up several young ones." These handsome Australian Pigeons in England are valued by Miss Anderson at from 15s. 6d. to 28s. per pair.

* * *

The Victorian Naturalist (March, 1903) contains " Notes on the Genera *Polytelis* and *Spathopterus* " by Mr. G. A. Keartland. The notes are most valuable, for the reason that they are Mr. Keartland's personal observations of the birds in captivity as well as in the open. Moreover, the three species—*P. barrabandi* (Green-Leek Parrakeet), *P. melanura* (Black-tailed Parrakeet), and *S. alexandræ* (Alexandra Parrakeet)—are amongst the most elegant of Australian Parrots. Mr. Keartland naturally defends Mr. North's action in changing the generic name of the last-mentioned species to *Spathopterus* because of the spatular formation of the second primary of the wings, merely stating that the British Museum authorities endorse the alteration, but cites no reference for his statement. Both Mr. North and Mr. Keartland must be aware that some other Australian Parrots show indications of spatula-shaped terminations to certain feathers of the primaries, notably in the genus *Neophema*. Mr. Keartland's adoption of the vernacular " Princess " Alexandra Parrakeet will not stand. Gould originally called the bird " Princess of Wales " Parrakeet. But that gracious lady is now our " Queen." Why not simply call the beautiful bird the Alexandra Parrakeet ? Independently of this criticism, a writer of a review on Mr. Seth-Smith's work " Parrakeets," in the

Avicultural Magazine (February), p. 147, remarks :—"By the way, it really seems like divisions run mad when a bird so obviously a *Polytelis* is erected into a separate genus on account of a slight difference in one wing feather! However, that is not Mr. Seth-Smith's fault, though the British Museum Catalogue of 1891 does not separate it."

* * *

OUR member, Mr. S. P. Townsend, is to be congratulated on the usefulness of his maiden article, "Notes on the White-faced Storm-Petrel" (*Pelagodroma marina*), which appeared in April number of *The Victorian Naturalist* (vol. xix.) Mr. Townsend made two mid-summer trips to Mud Island, Port Phillip Bay, the second time being accompanied by Mr. Clifford Coles They ascertained that the majority of the tiny burrows of the timid little Petrels were tenanted with young, and that most of the parents came to feed them from between the hours of 9 p.m. and midnight, and then disappeared. Other important notes bearing on the life-history of this Storm-Petrel are recorded. Mr. Townsend very properly suggested the advisability of the Government protecting these rookeries from demolition by the guano-diggers, but at the time he was not aware that, principally at the instigation of the Aust. O.U., a proclamation had appeared in the *Vict. Government Gazette*, 3rd December, 1902, protecting the White-faced Storm-Petrels on Mud Island during "the whole year." Now that Mr. Townsend has taken Mud Island "under his wing" he might easily get the necessary "permit" to work out other interesting points in the life-history of the little ocean waifs. For instance, it would be extremely interesting to learn when the White-faced Storm-Petrels come in to lay their single eggs, how long incubation lasts, and when the young are full grown and leave with their parents for their ocean haunts. Incidentally, in his paper, Mr. Townsend has recorded other birds seen on or in the proximity of Mud Island—some 28 species, of which 10, as may be expected for the locality, were Limicoline birds. Some of these he noticed in flocks in the lagoon—partially dry at low water—in the centre of the island.

* * *

A ROEBURNE correspondent writes :—"Since my wire to you on the 16th ult. concerning the extraordinary influx of Wild Turkeys after the rains, the birds appear to have decided to settle here until rain falls in the Gascoyne and Ashburton districts. The oldest residents here declare that they have never before seen such a sight. On the morning of Monday, 30th March, late sleepers were awakened by firing going on all over the town, resembling a village trying to beat off a besieging army; but the noise was only occasioned by many enthusiastic sportsmen endeavouring to bring off flying shots, as the huge birds went sailing low over the town. . . . The effect of the influx of Turkeys on the local butchering company is disastrous, the

inhabitants generally preferring turkey to mutton or beef. The proprietor will doubtless view the departure of the birds with a great amount of satisfaction."—*Morning Herald*, Perth, 14/4/03.

* * *

Bird Lore.—This admirable magazine more than maintains its high standard of merit in the number for January and February, 1903. Amongst the noticeable articles is the second instalment of a new departure in bird literature. This is from the pen of the well-known ornithologist Mr. Abbott H. Thayer, which opens with the statement that "the use of photographs of stuffed birds as illustrations in bird-books has become an insidious stumbling block in the path of those you are trying to lead to see the beauty of life in all its forms," which is followed by an announcement that each succeeding number of the publication will "contain a photo. from specimens in the American Museum of Natural History of some comparatively little known bird . . . . the name of which will be withheld until the succeeding number of the magazine." Mr. Thayer closes his present paper with the remark:—"But, as the case stands, photography's exquisite revelations go far beyond all art productions in the same field." The place of honour in the present issue is assigned to Mr. A. J. Campbell, who, in an article on "The Mound-Building Birds of Australia," brings all information possessed concerning these birds up to date, and enables the outside world to realize, by means of photos., how they work and what are their surroundings. "How to Study Birds" forms the subject of a most useful article from the pen of Mr. Frank M. Chapman, the editor. The remaining articles are of the best quality.

* * *

The Zoologist (March, 1903) contains a most interesting article on the extinct Black Emu (*Dromæus ater*) by Graham Renshaw, M.B. The only stuffed example known is in the Jardin des Plantes Museum, Paris. Dr. Renshaw, who examined the specimen, states it is about the size of a large Bustard, and differs from the ordinary Emu (*D. novæ-hollandiæ*) in its smaller size, in the greater development of its plumage, and in its colour being brownish-black instead of greyish. The history of the Paris specimen is well known, it being the skin of one of three live birds which Baudin and Peron captured on Kangaroo Island, off South Australia, in 1803. The other two birds were ultimately turned into skeletons, one remaining in the Museum of Comparative Anatomy connected with the Jardin des Plantes and the other being forwarded to the Royal Zoological Museum, Florence. Two other "parcels" of the Black or Pigmy Emu, or, as Dr. Latham called it in the vernacular, Van Diemen's Cassowary, have been traced to British soil by Dr. Renshaw, but were unfortunately lost. At the sale of the Bullock Museum, 1812, the Linnean Society purchased a "Lesser Emeu" for £7 10s.,

but where it came from and whither it went cannot be traced. A live pair of Van Diemen's Cassowary was exhibited in London—perhaps in the old menagerie of Exeter 'Change, the doctor thinks—and was seen by Dr. Latham, who described the species as *D. ater*, figuring one in his "General History of Birds" (1822), plate cxxxviii. Nothing is known of the fate of these birds either. All ornithologists, particularly Australians, will share in Dr. Renshaw's lament for the disappearance "utterly from the face of the earth" of the little, tractable Black Emu—a specimen of which lived in Paris for 18 years. He says the species should not rank with the "commoner" extinct birds—Great Auk, Labrador Duck, &c.—but should rather be enrolled in the "almost unique" series of exceedingly rare forms. What is to be said of "the squatter" who on leasing Kangaroo Island barbarously exterminated all the Emus (besides kangaroos) thereon?

There is just one interesting point in Dr. Renshaw's valuable article which he appears to have missed. Why did Latham call the birds he saw "Van Diemen's Cassowary"? It is strongly suggestive that this was because they came from Tasmania—Van Diemen's Land in those days. In the absence of testimony to the contrary, it is quite possible they did, because Tasmania was populated at the time, whereas Kangaroo Island was out of the beaten track of civilization, and the extinct Emus of both islands may have been allied forms if not identical.

* * *

DR. A. B. MEYER, of the Royal Zoological Museum, Dresden, has contributed to *The Ibis* (April, 1903) a most interesting article "On the Eggs of the Moa." From the facts collected by the learned doctor, he finds that the eggs of the great extinct birds of New Zealand are very much rarer than those of the *Æpyornis* of Madagascar, 36 of which are known, whereas only 3 or 4 perfect Moas' eggs are yet recorded, besides a dozen more imperfect or reconstructed examples. All the specimens yet discovered have been found on the South Island. The first nearly perfect specimen was found in 1859. It measures about 10 inches in length by about 7 inches in breadth, and is supposed to be referable to the *Dinornis novæ-zealandiæ* (Owen). It was sold for £100, and is in the Rowley collection (England). A second and complete Moa's egg is in the Otago Museum. It was discovered by a gold-dredging party on the Molyneux River in 1898, and is probably that of the *Pachyornis elephantopus*. Another perfect specimen was found in the same locality the following year, and was put up at auction in England with a reserve of £350. No bidder was found above £150, and it is reported that the egg was returned to New Zealand. About the year 1892 a fourth and nearly perfect egg, supposed to be that of *D. robustus*, was unearthed, and probably remains the property of a dredging company. Owen constructed in plaster an egg of *Dinornis*

maximus measuring nearly 17 x 13 inches. An average egg of the extinct Madagascar bird (*Æpyornis*) measures about 12 inches in length.

Protection of the Nutmeg-Pigeon.

REFERRING to an effort (see "Report for 1901–02," *Emu*, vol. ii., p. 185) by the Aust. O.U. to get the Nutmeg-Pigeons (*Myristicivora spilorrhoa*) properly protected on the islands off the North Queensland coast, whither the birds resort to breed, the Under-Secretary, Brisbane, has been good enough to cause preliminary inquiries to be made, and has forwarded to the Council of the Union the following correspondence :—

(1.) From Mr. J. N. Parkes, Home Secretary's Department, Townsville :—

"I had your (Under-Secretary's) letter published in the local columns of the Townsville *Daily Bulletin*. There have been no letters written to the paper, and no one has made any inquiries or offered an opinion excepting those to whom I have spoken. They all agree that it would be advisable to take action in the manner indicated by the hon. secretary Aust. O.U."

(2.) From Mr. C. Pennefather, Comptroller-General, Prisons Department, Brisbane :—

"The Torres Strait Pigeons commence their flight from New Guinea about the beginning of October, as a rule, and stream down the coast as far as the Palm Islands in countless thousands (I might, I think, safely say millions). They settle on almost all the many wooded islands and islets along the line of coast from Cape York to the vicinity of the south end of Hinchinbrook Island. They also settle on some of the islands in Torres Strait.

"They nest on the islands they settle on, and feed on the mainland, principally on nutmegs, and it is understood that the male birds carry over food to the females sitting on their nests. I am not, however, sure about this, but the fact remains that on many islands on which they nest there are no trees but mangroves, and consequently there is no fruit nearer than the mainland. In January and February the birds, with their young, now strong enough for the voyage, take flight to New Guinea.

"There can be no doubt that the indiscriminate slaughter which takes place on some of the islands while the birds are nesting must tend to reduce the natural increase, but it is a question whether this has any considerable effect upon the numbers which annually flock down the coast, and it does not follow that because the pigeons come to this part of the coast at a certain time that they may not have another breeding season in New Guinea. The fact that these birds afford a fresh meat diet to many settlers on the coast, as well as to the *employés* on the *béche-de-mer* and pearl-fishing craft, is worthy of consideration.