

should be the duty of Inspectors of Nuisances, the police, and other officers to see that Sparrows are not allowed to breed about premises ; municipalities should have power to prosecute ; householders and persons in charge of buildings should be compelled to take reasonable steps to prevent Sparrows nesting and rearing their young ; agricultural, pastoral, and horticultural societies receiving grants from the Government should be required to spend a certain sum annually in fighting the pest, by offering prizes for eggs or heads, or organizing their members for the purpose of dealing with it in other ways. A " Bird Day " in schools is recommended, and the opinion is expressed that " much can be done by encouraging ' the boy ' to a life-long Sparrow war." When dealing with the birds in the breeding season it is advised to " let the birds hatch the eggs and feed the young for a week, then destroy the young before they can fly." Poisoning operations can be most successfully carried out in August. In the hope of the ultimate establishment of a fresh " balance of nature " through the agency of our native birds of prey, Mr. Musson would protect the smaller Hawks and the Butcher-Birds, as well as the Owls and Crow. It is pointed out, however, that we cannot afford to idly wait for this desirable remedy, as " it takes time for them to become accustomed to a new article of food." The same reason, it is to be feared, may delay the adoption of the recommendation that we should use the Sparrow as food. While extermination may be impossible, it is obvious that if the recommendations of the report be carried out, the result must be a sensible check to the spread of this feathered larrikin, to the advantage not only of the farmer and fruit-grower, but also of some of our native birds. Appended to the report is a diagram map showing the wide distribution of the Sparrow in New South Wales.

Correspondence.

THE WHITE-EYE *v.* ORCHARDIST.

To the Editors of " The Emu."

SIRS,—I was very pleased to read in the last issue of *The Emu** that able article by Mr. A. H. Chisholm in defence of the little *Zosterops*. I agree entirely with that gentleman when he says that these little birds do more good than harm, and not only this species, but many more of our native birds which are supposed to be harmful. And I may go further in saying that I do not believe there is a single species of our native birds that can be qualified as a pest. The reason of my writing in this strain is that it annoys one much to see articles setting forth trifling mischief that some of our birds may do ; and, worse still, these articles are written by ornithologists, who must

* Vol. viii., p. 35.

know that every hand is against our defenceless birds; and then these ornithologists, if they wish to detail the habits of certain birds, should state their good traits first. It has been my experience to observe that when any of our birds do a little mischief it is invariably owing to man having destroyed the trees and shrubs, &c., which produced their native food, and, these trees having disappeared, they are compelled to eat something to sustain life, and I am very willing that these little friends, be they native birds (not imported pests), should take toll in the shape of some fruit, owing to their native feeding grounds having been destroyed in order to raise an orchard or garden. Great numbers of *Zosterops cærulescens* visit my garden in the autumn, and I am delighted to see these birds enjoy themselves on the big Turkey-fig or olive trees—the fruit of both these trees they love so much. I have often sat for an hour and listened to their pretty little warblings and chirpings as they hopped about in the shady trees, or on the ground (after the fallen fruit), in great numbers, and I do not begrudge the food they eat, while other land-owners shoot these little birds in numbers when they are attracted for miles around by the fruit on some old olive or fig tree, which fruit is next to worthless, the birds becoming an easy prey to the gun of the miserable fellow who lies in wait for them, while our real pests, such as the Sparrow and Starling (introduced birds) escape because they are too cunning to come within shot. Last season Loriekeets* visited the Adelaide plains in unusual numbers, perhaps due to the big bush-fires in the ranges, and most likely these beautiful birds have been in the habit for ages of visiting these plains for food when their supply in the hills gave out; but now, poor things! they find man has completely destroyed their forest feeding grounds, and, not satisfied with this destruction he shoots the birds on sight. Large numbers of these birds visited my garden, and showed a great liking for pears, and on several mornings just as the sun rose and shed its bright rays on the pear-trees, literally covered in these gorgeous birds, screaming and chattering as they made their morning meal, they presented a sight that I will not easily forget. But what was my sorrow a few days later to find my friends had visited a neighbour's garden, and soon a gun was brought to bear on them, and they paid with their lives; and so it goes on. Man takes up a piece of country in the centre of a virgin forest, clears it, and plants an orchard. When the trees begin to bear of course they are an attraction or bait for miles around to the unsuspecting birds, and they are destroyed one after another till the country far and near is drained of our native birds, and soon they will be exterminated.—I am, &c.,

S. A. WHITE.

Fulham, S.A., 5/9/08.

* *Trichoglossus nova-hollandiae*.