

ever, as I was upon a ladder near the house, my old friend alighted on my hand and sought for sugar, as though it were but yesterday, instead of five months ago, since she left.

During that season she again reared two families, with almost exactly similar proceeding as in the previous year, and in April, 1918, again disappeared. This time, when September came round, I was on the look-out with much interest to see if she would again return, and sure enough, on the 13th (the year before it was the 14th), the pair arrived. Without hesitation they came at once to my hand. By Christmas their first young were launched upon the world, and as I now write (27th February) the second pair of young are nearly old enough to be driven forth. The old mother bird will now come in through the open window when I call and perch quietly on my thumb while I open the cupboard and dip a piece of bread in the honey for her—a delicacy she dearly enjoys.

It would be interesting to know whither these birds migrate for the five months each year, and also what becomes of their young, for they never return to my domain, and, though I have occasionally seen a few members of the species elsewhere on this Mornington Peninsula, they do not appear in this immediate locality.

As regards their vocal accomplishments, my experience differs somewhat from that of Mr. Morse. The rather high-pitched, musical little bar of several notes, from which I have assumed they derived their name, is given frequently during the whole time they are with me, and the "Preet, preet" only when they call each other. When they want to wean off the first family before their second adventure they use quite a different sound—between a hiss and a snarl, long drawn out—from which the young invariably flee.

The Nesting of Lyre-Birds.

BY H. V. EDWARDS.

It was remarked in *The Emu* for January that the Lyre-Bird, as evidenced at times by its selection of nesting-sites, does not exhibit any particular shyness. I also have found the nest of this bird on a low stump within 20 yards of a main road, and in full view of it. As regards the bird's general nesting habits, Mr. Gregory Mathews remarked some time ago (in the *Sydney Mail*, I think) that, since the increase of foxes, the Lyre-Bird had taken to nesting on tall stumps, cliffs, and in other elevated positions.

Long before the introduction of this animal I have found Lyre-Birds' nests about creeks on the outskirts of Tantawanglo Mountain (between the Monaro and Bega (N.S.W.) districts), and at Mittagong, about 70 miles south of Sydney, built on cliff ledges and stumps. The bird is naturally erratic in the choice of a site

for its large and conspicuous nest. I have found it among ferns and undergrowth on the margins of mountain creeks, on logs and low rocks in open forest country, destitute of any cover; on the top of wild vines; at the foot of large tree-ferns, and in the crown of tall ones; while in one instance the nest was discovered in the fork of a tree over 18 feet above ground.

The female exhibits no shyness when there is a chick in the nest. While examining a young bird I have seen the female scratching about contentedly not four yards away. Indeed, when the young bird, on being handled, uttered its piercing call, the watchful parent, moved by that "mother-love which is stronger than the fear of death," came fussing distressedly around my feet. The male, however, kept at a safe distance, merely exhibiting himself occasionally on a low tree-branch or log, with his fine tail spread. In one instance I found a grub, probably the larva of a sarcophaga, or carnivorous fly, attached to the beak of a young Lyre-Bird, near the root. This parasite, however, disappeared before the chick left the nest.

As the Lyre-Bird is most at home about gullies in dense scrubs and remote mountain ranges, it should be in no danger of extinction. Its chief enemies are the "tail hunter" and the fox. The latter, I think, often disposes of the Lyre-Bird chick while in the nest.

The Kookaburra.

By J. T. RYAN, PARKVILLE (VIC.)

(Communicated by Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S.)

DURING the last few months I have seen several articles appearing in the *Argus* condemning this bird as an outlaw. Mr. Tom Fisher, of Ercildoune, says he creates a lot of havoc by eating our small insectivorous birds and robbing their nests. Well, I have spent most of my life in the bush—that is, about 30 years—and I have never seen the Kookaburra kill a small bird or interfere with their nests. I have always been a keen observer of nature and studied the habits of most of our native birds, and always looked upon the Kookaburra as one of the best birds we have in Australia. I have seen him killing snakes up to 3 feet long on several occasions. His method of doing so was to pounce on the snake and secure a good hold of it just behind the head, about 2 inches back from its fangs; then it would get up on the branch of a tree and beat the life out of it on one of the limbs, but never for a moment relaxing its hold on the snake. Sometimes another Kookaburra would get hold of the snake's tail and also drive his strong bill into the body of the snake—in fact, I have seen as many as four Kookaburras at the one snake, but the one that had the snake by the head never let go his hold until the snake was dead. Sometimes the snake would coil around the neck