in some country become pests and possible dangers to stock in other localities. So it is with birds and animals.

(The matter of the relation of Emus to prickly pear (Opuntia), has frequently been considered in Queensland and New South Wales. One of the most interesting contributions to the discussion is that of Mr. R. Macpherson, of St. George, Queensland, as printed in a Sydney newspaper. "I have been 38 years in this district," he says, "and during that period have carefully marked the position of Emu droppings showing traces of prickly pear. These spots I have inspected periodically for years, but have never yet discovered signs of a young plant springing up. Men have argued with me that they have seen a cluster of pear seedlings growing out of the droppings." I cannot agree with them, because pear seed takes a good while to germinate, and by the time a plant was showing through the ground there would be no signs of any droppings left, as they soon disappear. My idea is that those who argue this have seen a round patch of seedlings caused by a bird flying overhead and carrying ripe fruit which it dropped from a height. It would naturally fall 'squinsh' on the ground and look exactly as if it had sprung from an Emu droppings. Another conclusive argument, Mr. Macpherson thinks, is that Emus have been running up and down rabbit fences in his district for thirty years without leaving traces of pear.

Mr. Macpherson's case is important, but is it not possible that pear seeds may lie for several years before germinating, by which time all traces of their medium (dung, etc.) would have disappeared? Anyway, what sense is there in destroying Emus when cattle, which certainly spread pear, are running in the same country? It behoves bird-lovers, and indeed all good Australians, to see that these remarkable birds are not unduly victimised. — Editor.)

The Tasmanian Emu.

By H. Stuart Dove, North Devonport, Tasmania.

The notes on the pair of Emus at Circular Head by Mr. D. Dickson in the January number of our journal (Vol. XXV., p. 213) were read with interest. Wm. Westgarth, quoted by Mr. Dickson, says that the pair had been imported from the mainland. Just recently I have been searching through a number of the early journals, and in The Emu, Vol. III., p. 229 have found an interesting article on our bird by Mr. Dudley Le Souef, in which is a statement which bears directly on the Circular Head pair. It is as follows:—

"Mr. John Meredith, of Cambria, East Coast, says:—'I remember perfectly Emus being caught in this district prior to 1830, and for a few years subsequently also between this place and Avoca. I saw a pair at Circular Head, on Black Thursday, 1831. They were full-grown, and had with them half-a-dozen young ones. The old birds had been caught near Circular Head, and reared and tamed. Mr. Ransom, of Killymoon, in the Pingen district, remembers hunting Emus with kangaroo dogs about 1840, when he was a man of 18. He remembers Capt. Hepburn, of Roy's Hill, finding an Emu's nest with 8 or 9 eggs. A little later these were hatched under a turkey hen. From these were bred others, and a pair of them were given to the late Baron von Stieglitz, of Killymoon, one of which survived until 1873, when it was drowned in trying to cross a flooded river. With its death, the Tasmanian Emu, Mr. Ransom believes, became extinct. An old resident of Avoca, who knew Capt. Hepburn, used to say that the Tasmanian Emu was much taller than the Australian, but the general opinion of old colonists is that the two were identical. In the 'thirties they were habitually hunted and killed for food on the east coast and elsewhere. Gould,
writing about 1846, says that the Emus were then almost extirpated from Tasmania. He clearly regarded them as of the same species as those of Australia. Mr. T. Stephens, Hobart, says that in the early 'fifties Mr. Jas. Cox of Clarendon, imported one or more from Victoria along with two Native Companions, and others were introduced somewhat earlier."

In the same paper Mr. Le Souef says that two eggs are known to be in existence, one measuring 4.85 x 3.40 inches, the other 4.80 x 3.50 while a typical egg of the mainland species is 5.56 x 3.63. In a previous number (Emu, Vol. III., p. 114) the same writer had given another note on these eggs; the one measuring 4.85 x 3.40 was in his own collection, and was collected about forty years ago, i.e., about 1865, in the eastern district of the island. "If it is a fair type of their size, these birds must have been slightly smaller than the Australian race, and it would be interesting to know the dimensions of any other authentic eggs in existence (excepting the one in Mr. J. W. Mellor's collection). The granulations on a lighter ground appear finer than those from the mainland, and the egg is very dark green in colour."

The egg alluded to in Mr. Mellor's collection is evidently the 4.80 x 3.50 mentioned in Le Souef's previous notes. In The Emu Vol. XIII., p. 65, Mr. A. J. Campbell has an article on Mr. White's collection at Belltrees, Scone, on p. 73 of which appears this item:

"With tenderest care we are permitted to handle an authenticated egg of the defunct Tasmanian Emu (D. diemenensis) probably the rarest item of the whole collection." Mr. Campbell does not give any history of this specimen, nor are the dimensions stated, but possibly it is identical with one of those mentioned by Mr. Le Souef.

In The Emu, Vol. VI., p. 116, is an important article on the extinct Emus of Tasmania and King Island by Col. W. V. Legge, in the course of which he states that in his young days he actually saw living individuals of D. diemenensis. For the benefit of those members who may not possess the earlier volumes of our journal, the passage will be quoted. After stating that the Tasmanian species has been considered distinct from the continental D. novaehollandiae on account of the size of the egg, Colonel Legge writes:

"As regards the former, it may be interesting to members of the A.O.U. to hear that during the 'fifties the Tasmanian Emu used to inhabit, and breed regularly in, a locality known as Kearney's Bogs. This upland moor was part of the Rockfort estate, owned then by the writer's father-in-law, Major W. Gray. It is situated about 12 miles to the south of Avoca, in a portion of the Central Ranges, which flank the valley of the St. Paul's River. One of the shepherds of the estate, H. Wyburn, was resident at the Bogs, and used not infrequently to bring eggs to the house, and about the year 1845 succeeded in capturing two young birds, which were conveyed to Rockfort and reared in the goose-yard. They lived about the homestead for several years, and were tame and mischievous, coming to the open French windows of the dining-room to be fed, thrusting their heads into the room at times. Mrs. Legge, who was then a young girl, has vivid recollections of these Emus, and aver that they were large birds, very similar to those of the continent. Some years afterwards a pair of Tasmanian Emus, which I am of opinion were also brought from Kearney's Bogs, were kept at the Tullochgorum estate, not far from Avoca, and the appearance of these birds, as they ran along the fence of their enclosure, is firmly impressed on my recollection as a boy. They were slightly smaller than the average example of D. novaehollandiae, but must, from the accounts given of D. ater, of Kangaroo Island, have been larger than that bird and much in excess of the species whose osseous remains have been lately found in King Island."