

distribution as "Australia"). The Straw-necked Ibis is now commonly met with at least as far south as Perth, but Mr. T. Carter has recorded in *The Emu*, vol. iii., p. 209, that when in May, 1888, this bird first appeared in the region of the North-West Cape, it was quite unknown to the natives of that district.

3. **Black-tailed Native-Hen** (*Tribonyx ventralis*).—These birds have recently appeared in numbers in the south-west coastal districts (April and May, 1919), extending at least as far south as the Vasse River at Busselton, where Mr. T. Carter secured specimens. Mr. T. P. Draper and I saw about 50 of them one afternoon on the shores of Monger's Lake, close to Perth, and I have heard of them from various other localities. I am informed that the pastoral regions further north are very dry at present, and probably this accounts for the visitation.

4. **Hoary-headed Grebe** (*Podiceps poliocephalus*).—These birds are also very abundant at present (May, 1919) in the neighbourhood of Perth—not only on the lakes, but also on the salt-water estuary of the Swan River. I have never observed them on the river before, and a number of yachtsmen inform me that their presence there is quite unusual. Contrary to their usual habit, when approached they take refuge in flight rather than by diving. Doubtless their presence is due to the same causes which have driven the Native-Hens to the coast. The Little Cormorant and the Little Black Cormorant would also seem to have been affected, as they are far more numerous on the river than usual. As a rule the Pied Cormorant is much the most common species, but at present the other two species are much more numerous.

Introduced Birds in Queensland.

BY A. H. CHISHOLM, R.A.O.U., BRISBANE.

I HAVE been interested of late in collecting information relating to the arrival of overseas avifauna in Queensland. Some useful notes have resulted. There are records to show that in May of 1869 the State Acclimatization Society received a shipment of birds by the ship *Flying Cloud*, the species comprising the Rook, Starling, Lark, Blackbird, Thrush, and Sparrow. What became of these immigrants is not so clear, but the indications are that they were all exterminated. Certainly this was the case with the Rook, Lark, Blackbird, and Thrush, and I cannot find anyone who remembers the Starling and Sparrow in Queensland in other than recent years, the belief being that the birds now present worked their way up from the south. Had the Starling and Sparrow contingent of fifty years ago prospered, they would probably have been on the "black list" much sooner—this despite the declaration of the secretary of the society that there was not likely to be objection taken to any of the imports.

In addition to the Sparrow and Starling, the only introduced free birds now in Queensland are the Indian Dove and the Indian Minah. The latter, according to Sir Alfred Cowley, has been acclimatized in North Queensland for well over 30 years; and Mr. W. D. Armstrong states that Indian Doves were first brought to Brisbane as recently as 1912. In view of this latter fact, it is astonishing to note how plentiful the species is at present; in seven years twelve pairs have so multiplied as to make the bird the commonest in the Brisbane Botanical Gardens and a decided force in the suburbs. This is further proof that the hardy stock of European birds breeds much more rapidly than native species less accustomed to civilization.

The remarks of Mr. Armstrong, a former Speaker of the Queensland Legislative Assembly, in reference to the Dove are as follow:—"The Indian Dove (*Turtur ferrago*) was introduced to Queensland early in 1912. My nephew, the present Lord Huntingfield, was then with his regiment in India, and sent me 26 pairs, 16 pairs of which survived the journey. I kept four pairs at Adare, Gatton, but the natural enemies exterminated them. The others I gave to Mr. Bailey, the then Curator of the Brisbane Botanical Gardens, on the one condition that they were not to be placed in captivity. This was observed, the birds being liberated in Mr. Bailey's kitchen garden. Food was placed there daily for them, but they soon became independent of this, and made their own living from the various fruits in the gardens. My reason for introducing the birds was chiefly that our beautiful gardens lacked the pleasing music created by bird-life. To some extent the Indian Dove has overcome this, but much more could and ought to be done by the administration. I have since tried to get the English Wood-Pigeon out from England, but failed. I have had two consignments sent, but no bird survived the Suez Canal and the Red Sea."

Mr. Armstrong adds that the only other kindred experiment of a private nature that he can think of was the attempt of the late Robert Ramsay to acclimatize the Partridge at Eton Vale, this being made in the early seventies of last century. I understand that Californian Quail were also introduced, but did not long survive.

Bearing on the introduction of the Indian Minah (*Acridotheres tristis*) to Queensland, Sir Alfred Cowley obliges with the information that this species, now so well represented on northern canefields, was not imported direct from India, but obtained from Melbourne, where a goodly batch was collected in the grounds of St. Patrick's Cathedral and shipped to Queensland. That, says Sir Alfred, was in 1883, and the birds were obtained on behalf of the Victoria Sugar Company (since merged into the C.S.R. Co.), the Hamleigh Company, and the Gairloch Company, to combat a plague of locusts that was devastating the canefields. Most of the birds were released on the Herbert River plantations, some on the Johnstone, and a small batch at Townsville. The

success of this experiment is noteworthy. It has demonstrated that the Indian Minah, whose cheerful chatter and rich brown and white plumage is so well known about Melbourne, can be adapted to other service than city scavenging; that it is hardy enough to weather both the coolness of the south and warmth of the north (a test few native birds could stand); and that it can live just as well in the bush as in town. This latter point makes it seem the more curious that the Minahs of Melbourne stick so closely to the city.

- While on the subject of introductions to North Queensland, Sir Alfred Cowley mentions the interesting fact that a plague of rats following the plague of locusts caused the sugar companies to introduce the Indian mongoose. Only a small number of these animals were let loose, and little was heard of them later—which is probably just as well for many beautiful birds of North Queensland.

Since the above notes were written I have received an intimation from a leading resident of Stanthorpe (South Queensland) to the effect that Goldfinches have been noted about that locality since early in May of this year. The writer suggests that possibly they were driven up from the south by a severe drought. He adds:—"The Sparrows and Starlings, here in numbers at present, do no appreciable harm in a big fruit-growing and vegetable-producing district—but who will prophesy?"

A Holiday Trip to the Far Upper Murray.

BY COLONEL (DR.) H. W. BRYANT, R.A.O.U.

FEELING the necessity for a complete change of air as well as a mental rest, and after having made inquiries of friends, I finally decided to go to Corryong, in the north-east of Victoria, near the Murray River.

22nd March.—I left Melbourne for Wodonga, and changed trains from there for Tallangatta, where I arrived at 3.30 p.m. From Tallangatta a motor-car took me over the hills to Corryong, passing through some very fine mountain scenery. Saw a fair number of rabbits. At a sharp turn in the road the chauffeur pulled up to point out the place where a team of horses took fright only a few weeks before and burst through the flimsy protecting fence and pulled a waggon laden with stores after them. The waggon capsized, and, with horses and driver, rolled down the hill, turning over three times until stopped by some trees. The driver and horses miraculously escaped unhurt, but the goods were badly damaged. There were still many of the broken cases lying about, bearing evidence of the accident. We arrived at Corryong about 7.45 p.m., and put up at Jager's Hotel.