

Review.

PARRAKEETS.

[Parrakeets; being a Practical Handbook to Those Species Kept in Captivity. By David Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U. London: R. H. Porter, 7 Prince's-street, Cavendish Square W. (Pp. 1-281, with indices, contents, and appendix.)]

THE sixth number of this admirable work is to hand, and completes a book in which, as the author in his preface says, "it has been the aim . . . to make . . . a complete monograph of the imported species of Parrakeets." The three coloured plates in the issue now noticed are up to the standard of those in previous parts. The birds figured are the Splendid Grass-Parrakeet (*Neophema splendida*), the Turquoise or Chestnut-shouldered Grass-Parrakeet (*N. pulchella*), the Golden-fronted New Zealand Parrakeet (*Cyanorhamphus auriceps*), the Antipodes Island Parrakeet (*C. unicolor*), and the Varied Lorie-keet (*Ptilosclera versicolor*), all from the pencil of Mr. H. Goodchild. In depicting the last-named species the artist has doubtless placed pictorial effect before scientific accuracy. The withered lemon colour of the eucalyptus blossoms, and of the midribs of the leaves employed, to say nothing of the peculiar blue of the leaves, would be hard to match in Australia, which was once supposed to be the home of this botanical genus. The "systematic index" shows that some 130 species of a family in which, "scientifically speaking, there is no difference between a 'Parrot' and a 'Parrakeet'" have been dealt with, and by an appendix British information on the subject is brought up to date. In the appendix Mr. Seth-Smith says of a specimen of Masters Parrakeet—"The only difference I could detect between this bird and a Pennant . . . was in the yellow centres to some of the tail feathers;" and, as to the Red-mantled Parrakeet, he quotes from Mr. Johnstone, who, in August, 1903, records that two fine Red-mantled Parrakeets had been "bred from a cock Pennant and a hen Red Rosella." Still later, in a letter to Mr. A. J. Campbell, just received, the author of the book under review writes:—"I am now perfectly convinced that *Platycercus erythropeplus* of Salvadori is a hybrid between *P. eximius* and *P. elegans*, and that *P. mastersianus* is merely a sickly variety of *P. elegans*." Australasian ornithologists have always been doubtful as to the validity of these species, and will now be more confirmed in their opinion. The complete work of Mr. Seth-Smith is offered by the publisher, bound in art linen, gilt top, at 40s.

About Members.

WE heartily welcome Mr. Thomas Carter (late of Point Cloates) and his English wife back to Australia. Mr. Carter is again taking up pastoral pursuits, but, in lieu of the dry north-west, in the more genial south-west province of Western Australia.

Mr. C. French, F.L.S., the well-known Government Entomologist of Victoria, who has also devoted some time to the study of the economic side of bird life, has been elected a Fellow of both the Entomological Society of London and of the Society of Economic Entomology of America. The honour is well deserved.

Mr. F. M. Littler, of Launceston, who has not only contributed valuable papers to the *The Emu*, but has endeavoured to popularise the study of birds in Tasmania by his many articles on the subject in the local press, has also received the Fellowship of the British society named above, having found time whilst closely observing birds to learn much of Tasmania's insect life as well.

Mr. Geo. Graham, of Scott's Creek, near Cobden, Victoria, manager of Mr. Frank Madden's station, recently had a narrow escape from losing his life through being twice shot by a young man—a farmer of the neighbourhood—who appears to have been labouring under an imaginary grievance. For some days Mr. Graham's condition was considered critical, but he has happily made a good recovery, and been enabled to resume active work.

Members will congratulate Mr. Robert Hall, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S., on his safe return to Melbourne after an absence of ten months travelling in Asia and Europe. The most important part of his journey, ornithologically speaking, was his voyage down the River Lena, during which, with his companion, Mr. R. E. Trebilcock, he collected about 90 species of birds, in all some 400 skins. The Hon. Walter Rothschild has purchased this collection, together with the collector's field-notes, which in due course, it is understood, will appear in *The Ibis*.

Alteration of Close Season for Ducks and Quails in Victoria.

COLONEL Legge, F.Z.S., in his presidential address before the Congress of the Aust. O.U. at Hobart, said:—"In this State the close seasons have been changed, one might say, backward and forward, on the motion of members of Parliament, who know nothing of the economy of birds, and act upon information of sportsmen who have not carried out careful investigations and who take the occurrence of a particularly and abnormally early brood, or a second, or may be a third brood, as depicting the *normal* time of breeding. Hence we get unsound legislation, which does more harm than good."

Unfortunately Tasmania is not the only State where political busybodies interfere, against expert advice, with such matters as close seasons for birds. In Victoria the Minister for Public Works (Mr. Thomas Bent) has seen fit to curtail what has been proved by keen inquiry and experience to be the proper