

Pallid Cuckoo obtained, in which the plumage is much diversified. White predominates in its plumage, in many places tinged with buff and brown, resembling the colour of sealskin. Brown and white intermingle on the head; the feathers of the mantle are brown with buff tips; the body feathers on the back are white with brown centres; the upper tail coverts are brown with whitish edges, lanceolate in shape and ornamental in character, the ends of the barbs being unconnected; the tail feathers are sooty-brown and deeply toothed with whitish. The throat is like the head; towards the lower part of the under surface the brown gradually disappears, and on the abdomen all the feathers are white; primaries dark brown, toothed with white on the outer webs, and having buff spots on the margins of the inner webs; secondaries similar to primaries but without buff spots; wing coverts brown, or brown with buffy tips; lower surface of wings and tail grey, toothed with white, except the lower wing coverts, which are grey with wavy brown markings; axillaries white, tinged with buff; iris brown; feet horn-coloured; bill yellowish-brown. Wing, 6.9 inches; bill, 1 inch; tarsus, 0.8 inch.

Tern (*Sterna bergii* (?)).—A young Tern was brought to my residence on the 21st of March, 1904. As the bill was yellow and the iris black and the tarsi and webs of the feet wholly black, I assumed it to be an example of *Sterna bergii*, Licht. (*Thalasseus poliocercus*, Gld.) It was in the pied plumage of the young of that species. Back and wings mottled with sooty-brown and white; all the under surface white; head black, and the feathers of the head slightly elongated; nape white. It lived on the premises until the 5th of August, but never attained the use of its wings in flight.

Little Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax melanoleucus*).—This is the least shy of the Cormorants which frequent the Derwent, and permits one to approach within about fifty yards. A specimen received on the 18th July, 1904, had the culmen brownish-black and the remainder of the bill yellow; feet black.

Little Penguin (*Eudyptula minor*).—3rd November, 1903.—Three Little Penguin's eggs from Bruni Island measure in inches as follows:—(1) 2.25 and 1.69; (2) 2.26 and 1.64; (3) 2.25 and 1.65. Another egg of this Penguin measures 2.36 inches long and 1.70 inches broad. A partially incubated egg of medium size weighs about 2 ozs.—JAMES R. M'CLYMONT, M.A. Sandy Bay.

From Magazines, &c.

YELLOW-RUMPED FINCH.—“A specimen of the extremely rare *Munia flaviprymna*, Gould, from North-Western Australia, probably the first living specimen ever brought to Europe, was exhibited at the Crystal Palace Show, 25th, 26th, and 27th October. The judge, taking it for a hybrid, awarded it only a second prize, the first going to a specimen of the familiar *Zonogastris melba*.”—*Avicultural Magazine* (Nov., 1904), p. 53.

FROM the preface to vol. viii. of *The Zoologist* we note:—
“*The Zoologist* increases its circulation in our Greater Britain,
and colonial naturalists make use of its pages. Mr. Littler’s memoir
on the birds of Tasmania affords an object lesson.”

* * *

The Geelong Naturalist, September, 1904, contains “District
Bird Notes,” by C.F.B., which comprise brief field observations
on the Spotless Crake (*Porzana tabuensis*), Boobook Owl (*Ninox
boobook*), Flame-breasted Robin (*Petræca phænicea*), &c.

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The Ibis for October, 1904, published a letter from Sir
Walter L. Buller on the subject of the foster-parents of the New
Zealand Long-tailed Cuckoo (*Urodynamis*). The writer considers
that of the ten native and one introduced species given by Dr.
Fulton, the evidence for five at least is not satisfactory.

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RED-FACED OR RED-TAILED FINCH.—In *The Avicultural Magazine*
(January, 1905) the Rev. C. D. Farrar has contributed an article
entitled “The Breeding of the ‘Ruficauda’” in which a number
of interesting facts are recorded in humorously penned passages,
with homely illustrations. How often the collector has experienced
the reverend gentleman’s quotation—“The enjoyment is the
pursuit, and this ceases when our hand closes down on the prize.”

* * *

THE RED-WINGED LORY.—In the February (1905) issue of *The
Victorian Naturalist* Mr. G. A. Keartland contributes an interesting
note on a pair of Red-winged Lories (*Ptilinopus erythropterus*) which
he had in captivity for a year. On the 30th and 31st October the
female laid eggs on the floor of the cage, which were transferred to
a small box, where the bird continued to sit, and where, on the
2nd and 3rd of November, she laid two more eggs. After a fortnight
two of the clutch, which contained embryos, were unfortunately
broken, and the remaining two were not fertile. During the
fourteen days the female was noticed to leave her nest three times
only. While incubating she was fed by the male. The Lories
were received from Mrs. Chas. Clarke, Mary Vale Station, Queens-
land, who, writing to Mr. Keartland, states that she liberated a
pair of Red-winged Lories in her garden. The Parrots stayed near
the house, and reared four young ones in a hollow tree near. The
birds came regularly to the verandah to be fed, and, when the
young ones could fly the whole family often came “walking down
the hall like pet chickens.”

* * *

Bird-Love.—The Sept.-Oct. number has a further set of coloured
illustrations of Warblers; notes and photos. on “A Woodcock at
Home”; an interesting article on “October Bird Music”; a

biography of a Crow, under the title of "King Cole"; the usual notes on the proceedings of Audubon Societies and their valuable work; Educational Leaflet No. 11, dealing with the Screech Owl (by Mr. William Dutcher), &c. That the President of the United States takes a warm interest in our work is shown by the following passages from a letter to the editor of *Bird-Lore*:—"I would like to see all harmless wild things, but especially all birds, protected in every way. I do not understand how any man or woman who really loves Nature can fail to try to exert all influence in support of such objects as those of the Audubon Society. . . . Half, and more than half, of the beauty of the woods and fields is gone when they lose the harmless wild things. . . . As for the birds, which are the especial objects of the preservation of your society, we should keep them as we do trees."

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"SOME NEW FACTS ABOUT THE MIGRATION OF BIRDS" is the title of an article in a year-book issued by the Department of Agriculture, U.S.A., and written by Mr. Wells W. Cooke, assistant, Biological Survey. A reprint has been forwarded by the department. Mr. Cooke deals with the subject in a masterful way, holding that as to causes of migration the broad statement can be made that the beginnings of migration ages ago were intimately connected with periodic changes in the food supply, but this motive is at present so intermingled with others unknown, or but imperfectly known, that migration movements seem now to bear little relation to the abundance or absence of food. How do birds find their way, casualties during migration, its distance and routes, the question whether birds are exhausted after a long flight, and whether variations of temperature affect their movements, and the speed maintained during the passage from one zone to another, are dealt with. Unfortunately, so far as Australian observers are concerned, nearly all the birds dealt with are American species, but as the same problems exist almost all over the world, it is to be hoped that some day, partly by aid of the schedules which the Aust. O.U. has issued in connection with the matter, a similarly valuable brochure may issue from this side of the world. Two valuable maps are given—one as to route, the other showing speed of flight.

* * *

MODERN EGG-COLLECTING.—This subject has been attracting some attention in the pages of recent numbers of *The Zoologist*. The November (1904) issue has some hints from the pen of Mr. J. H. Salter, of the University College, Aberystwyth, which might be pondered over by even Australian collectors. After stating something of the ruin which the modern system of egg-collecting is bringing to the rarer native species in Britain, he writes:—"Posterity will probably condemn altogether the practice of making private collections of eggs, especially those in which it is sought to illustrate every possible variety of colouration by means of a large

series of clutches of the eggs of each species, however rare it may be. Many are induced to collect eggs by the same impulse which prompts others to amass old china or *bric-a-brac*, but with the difference that the harm which they do is irreparable. Their selfish greed and love of acquisition are seriously impoverishing the British fauna. Unfortunately the high prices obtained for well-authenticated clutches at recent sales encourage the unscrupulous collector to pay a high figure in the belief that the value of his eggs will increase with the growing scarcity of the bird which laid them, and that consequently his collection can at any time be disposed of at a profit if brought under the hammer. As illustrating the persecution to which our rarer birds are exposed, it may be mentioned that in a certain district in mid-Wales there are seven pairs of Ravens. They have not been allowed this year to bring off a single young bird. The Buzzards have fared very little better, while, needless to say, the Kites, now reduced to a miserable remnant of three or four pairs, have once more been plundered. The writer would ask others to join him in strongly appealing to all true naturalists to refrain from acquiring British-taken eggs of any species which is within measurable distance of extinction in these islands."

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IN *The Ibis* for October, 1904 (vol. iv., No. 16, p. 672) there appears a note from Mr. A. J. North on the nomenclature of the Blue Wrens of Tasmania and South-Eastern Australia respectively. In 1901 Mr. North discovered that the bird to which Ellis in 1777 first gave the name *Motacilla cyanea* came from Bruny Island, Tasmania (then supposed to be part of Australia). The name *Malurus cyaneus* would therefore, said Mr. North (*vide* Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W., vol. xxvi., part 2, p. 632) have to stand for the Tasmanian species, and that of *Malurus superbus* (Shaw) for its ally of the mainland. From the note under review it appears that Mr. North has now had access to further authorities, with the result that he finds that Shaw's bird, called by him *superbus*, came from Tasmania too. It would seem, therefore, that in the early days of Australian ornithology the Blue Wren of South-East Australia had no name at all, and that it has been simply masquerading in borrowed *noms-de-plume* ever since. Mr. North thinks it is not too late to rectify the omission, and accordingly proposes the specific name *australis* for the continental bird, leaving *cyaneus* for the island form. Now, the first and chief objection to this is that the Blue Wren of South-East Australia has been from the days of Gould onwards catalogued by the British Museum and known to collectors generally as *Malurus cyaneus*. Has not Gould's beautiful plate in his immortal "Birds of Australia," portraying life-size figures true to colour, stood for more than half a century over the title "*Malurus cyaneus*"? This long usage has given the name a prescriptive right to retention which overrides all purely historical considerations. To change it now would only be to produce that confusion which it should be the very object of

scientific nomenclature to avoid. In the second place, even granted the necessity for a change, the specific name *australis* is surely much too wide and colourless for the case in question. There are at least fourteen species of *Maluri* inhabiting Australia—why should one of these have appropriated to it a name that is equally applicable to all? It was reasonable enough for the first naturalist explorers to label a species *novæ-hollandiæ* or *australis*, though perhaps they rather overdid it; they had at least the excuse that they did not know of the existence of other Australian species belonging to the same genera—a plea we nowadays cannot put forward. No doubt it is not always possible to denote the specific characters clearly and exactly by the specific name; but such should be the object aimed at, and for that reason the name *australis* should be confined to species which have no congeners in Australia. Mr. North's researches are of considerable historical interest, but no adequate reason has been shown why the existing names—that is to say, *Malurus cyaneus* for the South-east Australian bird, and *M. gouldi* for the Tasmanian—should not continue to be used as heretofore. However, this is a matter for the Check-List Committee to consider.

About Members.

MR. F. M. Littler, F.E.S. (Launceston), has left by the *Persic* for England. He has gone on a six months' trip, chiefly on business, but hopes to have time for the pleasure and profit of making the acquaintance of many ornithological brethren in the "old land."

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ON the retirement of Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., &c., from the hon. secretaryship of the A.O.U., the following letter was addressed to him by his successor, Mr. A. Mattingley:—

"On the occasion of your retirement from the position of honorary secretary of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, the Council unanimously desire to convey to you their mark of the esteem in which they hold you personally, and also to indicate the appreciation with which they regard your labours as the first honorary secretary of the A.O.U.

"The present successful position of the Union is largely due to the indefatigable efforts maintained by you since its inception. The tact, attention, and considerate manner with which you have treated everything and everybody has endeared you to your Council colleagues, with whom you have worked so harmoniously.

"The Australasian Ornithologists' Union is indeed under a deep debt of gratitude to you for the able manner in which you have carried out the onerous duties pertaining to the honorary secretaryship during the first three years of its existence, while ornithological science at large has been advanced. Hoping that you may long remain one of the 'Birds of a feather.'"