

Review.

"CATALOGUE OF CANADIAN BIRDS."

THIS reference work has reached its third and concluding part. The original intention in preparing the "Catalogue" was to complete the work in two parts, but the large amount of valuable information which became available by the time Part II. was completed rendered a third part necessary.

Part III. deals with the Sparrows, Swallows, Vireos, Warblers, Wrens, Titmice, and Thrushes, including the order Passeres after the Icteridæ. The species are numbered consecutively, the vernacular name coming first, in bold type, followed by the technical designation and authority. Then follow succinct accounts of habits and range, and reference to Museum specimens, concluding with "Breeding Notes" when procurable.

The work is issued by the Geological Survey Department of Canada, under the direction of Dr. Robt. Bell, F.R.S., and is compiled by Mr. John Macoun, M.A., F.R.S.C., who cheerfully acknowledges information and assistance so freely given by quite a host of correspondents throughout the great Dominion. To Miss Marie Stewart fell the somewhat dry work of compiling the useful index, embracing the three parts, while the printing of the whole is well executed by S. E. Dawson, Ottawa, "Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty."

When will the Commonwealth of Australia issue such a useful work of reference, or is such a national duty to be relegated to private enterprise?

The Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) in Captivity.

BY (MRS.) MARY G. ROBERTS, HOBART.

HAVING been asked to write some notes for *The Emu* on the little Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) and the common Bronze-wing (*Phaps chalcoptera*) in my aviaries, I sit down to make the attempt, with the hope that I may be able to prove a few interesting facts, to those who, like myself, take great interest in aviculture. The two species have been in adjoining aviaries, only separated by a wire partition; thus I have had the opportunity of watching closely their nesting operations from the latter part of August until the present time (about six months); the work has been to me a source of unlimited pleasure, although I have to record one or two disappointments which have occurred. Referring more particularly to the Crested Pigeons, they were the first, at about the end of August, to show indications of nesting; and to those who have not had opportunities of watching them, I may say that this species is unmistakably more excitable and nervous than the Bronze-wing, hence greater difficulties present themselves in observing their

movements in captivity. They are not easily frightened from the nest by other birds flying about them, there having been all along several others in the aviary, besides a pair of Silver Pheasants; but from the time the eggs were laid, upon my approaching the door, a note of alarm was always sounded by the sitting bird, although I was then quite 16 feet away—a small cry, a sort of fretful “Wee wee.” As time went on they seemed to become less uneasy, and more silent, until the young emerged from the egg, when the cry was resumed.

When the male bird is paying his addresses to his love he is to be seen to the greatest advantage; he has a way of bowing or curtsying to her, each time making a sound similar to “Woof, woof,” and at the same time spreading out his tail into a fan, the wings on either side forming smaller ones, and on which can then be seen four or five feathers forming two rows of jewel-like spots, the outer having green, the inner purple, marks, reminding one of emeralds and amethysts—a sight beautiful to behold, but too transitory. The first young one appeared about the 15th of September; the other egg, although chipped, did not hatch. An incident occurred in connection with this little bird. When it was a few days old, fearing the parents might be disturbed by their companions, I carefully, but unwisely as it proved, fastened a bag across their corner, giving them only a small space to pass to and fro. When evening came the sitting bird left the nest as usual, but evidently the other one, which should have taken up the duty, was either frightened or unable to find the way in, for on visiting the aviary at 9 p.m. I discovered the baby bird forsaken, cold, and weak. I immediately brought it to the house, warmed and fed it, and took care of it for the night. Next morning about 10 a.m., upon going for a small box to keep it in, the thought occurred to me that I might see what the parents would do, so I entered the aviary, placed it on the nest, and retired outside to await results. The attention of the mother was at once attracted by its presence, and without much delay she evidently recognized it, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing her nestling down on it once more, and was able confidently to leave it in her care. The little bird having been successfully reared, by the 15th October the parents were building again, and laid this time in a nest built about a yard from the door and barely that distance from the path that everyone passed along. Unfortunately, some alterations had to be made to the front of the aviary—palings removed, and wire-netting substituted—with the result that the sitting birds were frightened from the nest, almost on the eve of hatching, viz., the 29th of the month.

They shortly began to build again for the third time, in the same position as the first nest, on a small platform of twigs, in a V-shaped corner of the aviary. I kept no record of the date of laying, but the first squab hatched out on or about 4th of December; both young birds were observed out of the nest on the 20th of the month. One matter that struck me as remarkable was the almost complete

plumage the birds had at that time, excepting the shortness of the tail; another was that I never saw the parents feeding them after they left the nest, although I was constantly passing and repassing the aviary; I think they must do so, unless they mature more quickly than the Bronze-wing does. In February they began to nest for the fourth time, and on the 14th were sitting on two eggs, in the same obscure corner; but misfortune was to overtake them again, in a somewhat similar way to that which befel their second effort. The grounds were about to be opened to the public again, for the benefit of a charity, and it was necessary that this aviary should be turfed, the only one in which the natural grass had disappeared; while this was being done, the bird got frightened by the constant intrusion, flew excitedly from her nest, and eventually deserted it on the 22nd of the month.

I bewailed the loss very much, and concluded the end of the season had arrived, but not so; in a few days I noticed the male bird curtsying and cooing to his mate, and nesting preparations being made for the fifth time, by the 2nd of March they had settled down to work again, and are sitting steadily enough at present.

I have not been able to supply any data as to the length of time each bird sits, or at what hours they exchange places. The sexes being so exactly alike in marking, I have found it difficult to tell which one was on the nest.

The Coloured Plate (XIII.)

Mirafra woodwardi (Rufous Bush-Lark) was discovered by Mr. John T. Tunney, the collector for the Western Australian Museum, Perth, on the red sand tracts near Onslow in North-West Australia, although, according to Dr. P. L. Sclater, F.R.S., one specimen was received by the British Museum from the Gould collection, and registered as *M. horsfieldi*. Mr. Tom Carter, lately of Point Cloates, in his article entitled "Birds Occurring in the Region of the North-West Cape,"* stated that his attention was first drawn to these birds on the 30th October, 1900, when they were seen dusting themselves in the red sand. Mr. Carter further states that the birds are tame in habit, and were only seen on the inland red sand plains, and that they sit close in the grass, but occasionally perch in the bushes.

The bird was described by Mr. Alex. Wm. Milligan,† the Honorary Ornithologist to the Western Australian Museum, Perth, and named in honour of Mr. B. H. Woodward, F.G.S., C.M.Z.S., the Director of the same institution.

Mr. Robert Hall, F.L.S., C.M.Z.S., described the nest and eggs of the species in the *Vict. Nat.*, xviii., page 80.

Amytis housei (Black Grass-Wren) was discovered by Dr. F. M. House in North-West Kimberley in the year 1901.‡ That gentleman,

* *Emu*, vol. iii., p. 95.

† *Vict. Nat.*, vol. xviii., p. 25.

‡ Appendix F., "Report on Exploration of North-West Kimberley" (*Emu*, vol. i., p. 114).