

## Correspondence.

GALDENS.

*To the Editors of "The Emu."*

SIRS,—In a short paper read before the Bird Observers' Club on the birds observed by Dampier during his voyages to Terra Australis,\* I commented on his mention of "Galdens," remarking that I had been unable to trace the word, though I had consulted the "New English Dictionary," Newton's "Dictionary of Birds," and a number of other dictionaries. The publication of the paper has had the happy effect of bringing a very interesting letter from Professor Alfred Newton, the author of the extremely valuable book to which I referred.

One is glad to be able to acknowledge that the Professor's Dictionary is not at fault, though at the same time it is right that I should say that I had read what he has entered under the heading "Gaulding" without connecting the word with Dampier's "Galden," because Professor Newton's references are confined to Scottish allusions, and mention neither West Indian nor Australian birds. The "New English Dictionary" is, however, at fault, because the scheme upon which it is constructed makes a feature of giving the varieties of spelling of all words included in it, with quotations from authors by whom the words have been used at different periods. It nowhere gives Dampier's word "Galden," though it gives "Gaulding," with the cross-reference "see Gaulin," and under "Gaulin" adds another form of spelling—"Gawling." The word is there described as of Jamaican origin, and is defined as "a kind of Egret." Illustrative quotations are given from Ray, writing about 1705; from Sloane's "Jamaica," 1725; from Hughes's "Barbadoes," 1750; from Browne's "Jamaica," 1756; and from Gosse's "Birds of Jamaica," 1847. But there is no quotation from Dampier, and his way of spelling the word is omitted.

Newton's "Dictionary of Birds" does not, it is true, give Dampier's spelling, nor does it mention the West Indian use of the word, but as his concern was not orthography but ornithology, the omission was not, in his case, of much importance. I am glad that, by calling attention to the point, I have been the means of clearing up an obscurity. Indeed, "Galden" is so good a word that one would venture to suggest that it would be a better popular name for the bird to which Dampier applied it than "Little Mangrove Bittern." Why should not the brave old navigator's word, spelt in his own way, be used?

Professor Newton, writing from Magdalen College, Cambridge, says in his letter:—

"I notice that in the last number of *The Emu*, which reached

\* See *The Emu*, vi., p. 21.

me a few days ago, you say (p. 23) that you are puzzled by the meaning of the word 'Galdens,' used by Dampier, and that it is not mentioned in my Dictionary. Now, 'Galden' is only one of the many ways of spelling the word 'Gaulding' or 'Gaulin,' which you will find I have mentioned on page 310 of that work; and I think there can't be a doubt that Dampier meant by it one of the smaller Herons—probably of the genus *Butorides*—of which I think you have three or four species in Australia, though I should not venture to say which of them it was. Dampier, as you must well know, had been much in the West Indies, and there, according to my experience, the word 'Gaulding' is generally given to the familiar Little Green Heron (of North America)—*B. virescens*—though I have heard of its being applied to some of the other Herons. I have always looked on Dampier as a very good observer, and what he says is almost always to be trusted. Of course, he was not so wise as he would have been had he lived at the present day, but there were few, if any, to equal him in his own. 'The head and bones of a hippopotamus' which he says a few pages further on were found in the maw of a shark were, I take it, those of a dugong."

It is worth mentioning that Professor Newton, in his Dictionary, gives three other spellings: "Goldeine" and "Goldynis" from an Act of the Scottish Parliament of 1555, and "Golding" from another Scottish Act of 1600. He suggests a connection with the Icelandic word "Gulond," meaning the Goosander.

With this key, consulting Gould's "Birds of Australia" and Campbell's "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," Dampier's Galden can be marked down with little risk of error. It was, I do not doubt, the Little Mangrove Bittern (*Butorides stagnatilis*), figured in vol. vi. of Gould, and dealt with on page 963 of Campbell. The latter author says of it:—"It will be observed that this interesting little Bittern enjoys a goodly range, its favourite haunts being small islets covered with mangroves, and low swampy points of land running into the sea." He also observes that Gilbert found a colony of Little Mangrove Bitterns on two small islets in Coral Bay, near the entrance to Port Essington. They may well have been the same colony as observed by Dampier.

As suggested by the Professor, Dampier picked up the word in his West Indian buccaneering days. He first went to the West in 1674, when 22 years of age, and there was hardly a phase of the wild life of that time and region that he did not experience, from honest logwood-cutting to rank piracy. His adventures there are well known. The latest to relate them is Mr. John Masefield, in his "On the Spanish Main" (1906). The quotations given under "Gaulin" in the "New English Dictionary" indicate the common use of the word there. Dampier simply spelt it in his own way, when writing of his Australian voyages;

and his way, to my thinking, makes it a finer word than any of the alternative spellings.—Yours, &c.,

14th November, 1906.

ERNEST SCOTT.

## South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE bi-monthly meeting was held at the residence of Dr. A. M. Morgan on 31st August, 1906, when Mr. J. W. Mellor presided over a good attendance. Notes were received from Mr. E. Ashby upon native birds found breeding at Blackwood. The Chairman notified the members that the Australasian Ornithologists' Union's sixth congress would take place in Tasmania from 22nd November to about 8th December, when Launceston and Hobart would be visited, and meetings held to discuss bird subjects, following which a working camp would be held at Mount Barrow. Mr. M. Symonds Clark drew attention to an extract from the journal of the late John M'Douall Stuart upon his exploration in Australia in 1860, in which the intrepid explorer mentions a strange Cockatoo shot near Mounts Rennie and Peake, Central Australia. The wings were of a beautiful crimson hue, with a light leaden colour on the back. The description as given could not be placed. Dr. A. M. Morgan recorded several birds found breeding early at Ironbank, near Upper Sturt; while Mr. J. W. Mellor and Capt. S. A. White gave notes upon birds at the Reedbeds, the former testifying to the tameness of the feathered friends of mankind when treated kindly. Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., noted the Red-chested Quail (*Turnix pyrrhothorax*) breeding at Meningie, Lake Albert. Mr. Alfred Crompton recorded the Straw-necked Ibis (*Carphibis spinicollis*) having laid in captivity. Mr. E. Ashby sent evidence of having found the egg of the Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx plagusus*) in the nest of the White-bearded Honey-eater (*Meliornis novae-hollandiae*), which was considered a rare occurrence. Mr. F. R. Zietz observed the Flame-breasted Robin (*Petroica phoenicea*) at Teatree Gully on the recent holiday, which was late in the year, as this little bird does not breed here, but departs early to lay and rear its young in southern highlands. Mr. Robert Crompton presented interesting notes regarding a trip recently taken to Lake Frome, where he had studied the bird life, which was somewhat different to that nearer Adelaide. Mr. Crompton showed several birds, including the Tricolored Chat (*Ephthianura tricolor*), the Red-breasted Babbler (*Pomatorhinus rubeculus*); also eggs of these and several species of birds from the Lake Frome district. Mr. J. W. Mellor displayed a rare clutch of eggs of the Rock-Warbler (*Origma rubricata*) from New South Wales. Mr. E. Ashby showed a species of Honey-eater from the Northern Territory resembling the genus *Myzomela*, but longer in the tail, which was queried as new. He also had several species from New South Wales, including the Grass-Warbler (*Cisticola exilis*), the Leaden Fly-catcher (*Myiagra rubecula*), the Fuscous Honey-eater (*Ptilotis fusca*), and the Little Field-Wren (*Chthonicola sagittata*). Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., exhibited a series of small Honey-eaters, including the Brown Honey-eater (*Glycyphila ocellaris*), the White-breasted (*G. fasciata*), Brown-backed (*G. modesta*), the Black Honey-eater (*Myzomela nigra*), the Sanguineous Honey-eater (*M. sanguinolenta*), and the Red-headed (*M. erythrocephala*). Dr. A. M. Morgan exhibited a number of species of birds' eggs for comparison with others exhibited.

The bi-monthly meeting of the South Australian Ornithological Association was held at the residence of Dr. A. M. Morgan on Friday, 26th October, 1906. Mr. J. W. Mellor presided. Dr. Morgan reported having been able to identify by observation in 14 days 82 species of native birds while on a trip to Mount Gunson, a district which to the vision of