

Mr. Belcher confesses "that the argument that we should study and protect our native birds because of their economic utility" leaves him rather cold. He admits that most species of native birds, in obtaining their food, do greatly help the farmer, orchardist, and gardener, but finds "the most compelling claim of Australian birds upon our affections to lie not so much in their money value as in the direct influence of beauty which they will exert upon anyone who cares to open his eyes and ears to the life that is all about him by green forest, open plain, or sounding shore." One has to read only a few pages of the book to discover that its author is a true naturalist, an observer, who delights in all living birds, even the Cormorant, which "reveals a shining lustre on his ebon wings which not art of modern silk-weaver could hope to imitate." He is fortunate in his district, which presents great diversity—plains, rivers, reedy swamps, lakes, mud-flats, and forest areas. He records no fewer than 244 species, and has no doubt that further investigation would add from 20 to 50 more to the list. The Geelong, it is justly claimed, is a thoroughly representative Victorian district. The author has adopted, "as far as was applicable," the scientific nomenclature of Mr. Gregory Mathews's "List of the Birds of Australia," published in 1913 in connection with his monumental work, "The Birds of Australia."

While packed with accurate observations, the pages of Mr. Belcher's book are brightened by many excellent bits of descriptive writing. For example:—"I remember one June morning at Inverleigh—a fine winter's morning, but white mists filled the valley of the river, so that only here and there could you see the tops of the red gums—and from these red gums there poured from a hundred unseen throats of early-mating Magpies a chorale of the joy of life unquestioned, which will never be equalled for me by any carol of Thrush, or Nightingale's song of the northern June in a Surrey copse."

The fifty illustrations from photographs are mostly of a high standard, and the volume is well produced.

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### About Members.

THE editors have received the following communication from Mr. A. J. Campbell:—"After an absence of over three months, I have returned from Northern Queensland. The trip was pleasant and profitable—a continuous feast for a bird-lover. I touched at Dunk Island, historical for some of Gould's types, collected by Macgillivray, and now the well-known home of our member and energetic writer, Mr. E. J. Banfield. I also visited the Cardwell district, the "happy hunting grounds" of E. P. Ramsay and the late Kendall Broadbent, not to mention my own exploits there in 1885 with Messrs. Coles Bros. and A. Gulliver. I brought back little material; my work was chiefly observing

and photographing. I exposed about 130 plates. Many of the subjects, I hope, are unique. For instance, the Large-tailed Nightjar on its nest, several tree-orchids and terrestrial orchids in bloom, scenes in the picturesque Hinchinbrook Channel, &c. I received open-handed hospitality from the Queensland members of the R.A.O.U. whom I met—Mr. and Mrs. Banfield, Dunk Island; Messrs. and Miss Gulliver, Townsville; Mr. and Mrs. Cornwall and Messrs. Harvey Bros., Mackay; and Dr. Hamlyn Harris, Brisbane; besides numerous other private friends.

"The idea of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union meeting in Queensland, especially the north, next year (1915) is excellent. There will surely be a great response in that State."

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### Obituary Notice.

BY the death of Mr. Max Egger, which occurred at Tumut in November, 1914, the Union has lost one of its most enthusiastic members. A keen field ornithologist, Mr. Egger had an unrivalled knowledge of Riverina bird life. A Victorian bird-lover, who had the privilege of spending some days with him in 1913 in and around the Jerilderie district, found Mr. Egger a delightful companion—generous, kindly, and modest. The news of his unexpected death caused deep regret in Jerilderie, where he had lived for many years, and the feeling will be shared by members of the Union.

In an obituary notice in its issue of 27th November, 1914, the *Jerilderie Herald* stated that Mr. Egger had driven from Jerilderie to Tumut a week before his death, and probably contracted pneumonia on the way. When he left he appeared to be in his usual health. "The deceased" (this journal states) "was a quiet, inoffensive man, and was generally liked and respected by everyone, both in town and district. He came to this town nearly 19 years ago from Tumut, where he previously resided. He was a native of Switzerland, and shortly after his marriage had to come to this country for the benefit of his health. He started in business here as a watchmaker and jeweller in 1896, but had to relinquish it and seek a more out-of-door occupation. Being an ardent ornithologist, he commenced bird-trapping and photography. In this pursuit he continued for years."

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### Notes.

ANY member requiring at least 30 different parts of *The Emu* of former years' issues available, if the Council approve, may obtain them at the specially reduced price of 1s. per copy.

MESSRS. Witherby and Co., London, notify by advertisement in this issue that on the completion of the present volume (iv.) the subscription list for Mr. G. M. Mathews's "Birds of Australia" will be absolutely closed. Intending subscribers should, therefore, place their orders without delay.