

severely away from the nest. In half an hour's time I stole a march on the young actors, and found them sitting up complacently, with eyes wide open! Immediately, however, these were closed again, and the uncanny mimicry (?) of caterpillars was vigorously resumed.

Is there, one wonders, any affinity between this queer process and the Bell-Birds' habit of storing their nests with caterpillars? Of dozens of these homes examined, I do not recollect one that had not its complement of caterpillars, usually the larvæ of *Darala ocellata*. Sometimes the insects were on the rim of the nest; sometimes they were under the brooding bird or beneath the young ones; sometimes they were obviously dead; sometimes they were alive, but sluggish; and sometimes they appeared to be petrified. I saw no indications of the caterpillars being used as food,* and the only theory presenting itself was that the birds gathered them for the same reason as the young Bell-Birds wave their heads—defence purposes. Can anything better be offered? An interesting observation upon the subject is given by Mr. G. F. Hill in his "Ornithological Notes on the Barclay Expedition of 1911-12,"† wherein he remarks that he was surprised to find Bell-Birds in the Northern Territory using a species of caterpillar (*Spilosoma*, sp.) closely related to *Spilosoma obliqua*, which he has noted to be much favoured by Victorian Bell-Birds. The matter was discussed also in early issues of *The Emu*, but no definite conclusions arrived at.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Brisbane, May, 1918.

Correspondence.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

DEAR SIRs,—In the issue for October, 1917, page 108, it is stated that I express doubt in reference to the Pacific Gulls dropping "Warrener shells" to break them and extract the contents. It was my old friend Dr. A. M. Morgan who doubted the above, and I brought evidence to bear in my article which appeared in *The Emu* to substantiate my contention that the Gulls do drop the shells. I would like to know what evidence caused Mr. Le Souëf to be "satisfied the Pacific Gull does drop the shells to break them." Not by personal observation, I should think.—Yours truly,

S. A. WHITE.

"Wetunga," Fulham (S.A.), 22/11/17.

* Mr. Charles Barnard, in "Nests and Eggs" (Campbell), makes the sound point that the caterpillars usually gathered by *Oreoica* seem altogether too hairy to be used as food by the birds. This observation applies particularly to caterpillars of *Darala* and *Spilosoma*.—A. H. C.

† *Emu*, vol. xii., p. 258.