

light reflecting as distinct from light production.—C. E. BRYANT, Melbourne, Vic., 14/7/52.

Oriole killing Nestling.—On October 18, 1951, while strolling through the bush in the Warramite hills area, I noticed an Olive-backed Oriole (*Oriolus sagittatus*) smashing against the high branch of a manna gum on which it was perched, a large object which it held in its beak. A pair of White-naped Honeyeaters (*Melithreptus lunatus*) were darting at the Oriole meantime, but it ignored them and continued with its activities, giving its call of 'Or-ree-or-ee-ole' the whole time.

Curious as to the object being so maltreated, I managed, with a luckily directed missile, to alarm the Oriole into dropping it. On investigating I found that the subject of all the smashing was a naked White-naped Honeyeater nestling.

I venture no explanation of what I imagine was rather unusual Oriole behaviour, but would record that a nest of the species was suspended from the end of a branch of another tree some 20 yards distant.—D. C. GREY, Moonee Ponds, Vic., 30/9/52.

Obituaries

DR. J. L. PETERS

The curator of birds at the Museum of Comparative Zoology, at Harvard University, James Lee Peters, died at Cambridge, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1952, in his 63rd year. Peters was already an acknowledged authority in the field of bird taxonomy, when, in the '20s, he conceived the idea of writing a 'Check-List of the Birds of the World'. The first volume appeared in 1931, with additional six volumes during the years 1934-51. To complete the work eight to ten more volumes will be needed. The great accuracy of this work, and its modern standards, have made it an indispensable tool of all ornithologists, and it will presumably remain the standard reference work in bird taxonomy for many decades to come.

Peters was a quiet and retiring person, but with a rare sense of humour. He was always helpful to those who sought his advice, provided they shared his deep interest in ornithological science. There is hardly another ornithologist left who has as balanced a knowledge of the birds, both of the Old and the New World, as Peters had. His death leaves a gap which cannot be filled.—E. MAYR.

ERWIN NUBLING

Mr. Nubling was born on July 26, 1876, at Ebensee in Upper Austria, where, as a youth, he became associated with the steel industry. He came to Australia in 1901 and,

as attorney of the Czecko-Slovakian Steel Works, he opened a branch in Sydney in 1921 from which he retired in 1935 as managing director.

From the time of his arrival in Australia he became interested in bush life, and during the years that followed he made many excursions through the forest ranges of Victoria. When he went to reside in Sydney in 1921 he became intensely interested in the Satin Bower-birds of the National Park and, to *The Emu* and other periodicals, he contributed several articles on the habits of these birds. It was on December 30, 1923, that Mr. Nubling made the interesting discovery that Satin Bower-birds paint the sticks in their bowers, a fact which had not been previously known to ornithologists. He married a daughter of the late Henry Kendall, one of the first co-editors of *The Emu*. In 1941 he returned to Victoria to reside at Mentone, where he died on January 14, 1953, at the age of 76 years.—D.J.D.

Reviews

Notes on Some Petrels of the North Pacific.—Under this title Oliver L. Austin, Jr. (*Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., Harvard*, vol. 107, no. 7, November 1952, pp. 391-407) makes important proposals for a species group occurring in Australian and New Zealand seas—the gadfly petrels related to the Gould Petrel (*Pterodroma leucoptera*) of Cabbage Tree Island. Austin dismembers the species *leucoptera*, as defined by Murphy in 1929, but unfortunately has overlooked the important contributions to the same subject by Fleming (*Emu*, vol. 41, 1941, p. 69) and by Falla (*Emu*, vol. 42, 1942, p. 111). He divides the species *leucoptera* in an altogether different manner from those authors but uses only one character (presence or absence of white on the inner web of the outer primaries) as compared with the detailed analysis of Fleming and Falla, whose viewpoint must, therefore, be upheld on a 'points decision'. Austin also associates the forms *brevipes* and *hypoleuca* as one species: they are placed in different species groupings by Falla. He regards the form *longirostris*, described by Stejneger from Japan, as probably breeding in southern seas and occurring in the north Pacific only as a migrant. Falla, in making the same suggestion in 1942, synonymized it with *masafuerai* from Juan Fernandez.—D.L.S.

Avicultural Notes.—From time to time the *Avicultural Magazine* contains matter of interest to ornithologists not normally concerned with cage birds, and bird students should not overlook this side of ornithology. Vol. 58, no. 6, contains 'Some Notes on Grass Parakeets', by the Duke of Bedford. Commenting on the tightening up of export regulations in Australia, the author says that stock acquired from Australian ornithologists is often unsatisfactory—"Australian fanciers have a habit of keeping their birds in aviaries which are much too small [which] . . . does not encourage good health or good manners in birds which have been long confined in them." Bourke Parrots are claimed to be "not really Grass Parakeets at all, but are a species wholly distinct and with no near relatives of any kind".

David M. West (California, U.S.A.) records the 'First Breeding of the Many-colour Parakeet in the U.S.A.'. The species is said to