

bring in the splendid tails of the Australian Pheasant, which are said to abound among the hills."—(*Backhouse, Letters*, part 5, 1839, pp. 6-10.)

"The blacks often bring in the splendid tails of the Lyre Bird, *Menura superba*, which is called in Australia the Pheasant or the Bird of Paradise. It is said to abound among the hills of this district. John Batman has some fine Emus captured here."—(*Backhouse, Narrative*, 16th November, 1837-1843, p. 506)."

Stray Feathers.

I AM indebted to Mr. Tom Carter for the skin of a Bare-eyed Cockatoo, *Cacatua gymnopsis*, from the region of the North-West Cape, which tends to prove that the bird I debited for that district* as the Long-billed Cockatoo (*Licmetis pastinator*) is really *C. gymnopsis*. Therefore, obviously, it makes a good note for "stray feathers." In 1890 I gave Western Australia as a habitat of *gymnopsis*,† but appear to have turned my back on myself without sufficient reason, except that I was swayed from the actual fact by Mr. Carter's fascinating field notes. Possibly the Cockatoo noted by Mr. G. A. Kearnland, of the Calvert Expedition, as having been noticed between Mullawa and Cue, and again seen in countless numbers near the Fitzroy River, was likewise referable to *C. gymnopsis*, and not to *C. sanguinea*, as stated.‡ It is to be regretted that a skin was not preserved for confirmatory evidence, especially from the Fitzroy, where the birds were so plentiful.

A Halcyon (*H. sordidus*) accompanied the Cockatoo, and was interesting from the fact that I have not noticed this species recorded previously for the Western Coast. Date on skin, 14th June, 1900; locality, Point Cloates.

Mr. Carter also forwarded another Halcyon, which he shot at Vasse, in the south-west, on the 3rd February last. It resembles closely the common *Halcyon sanctus*, but has decidedly a more bluish (bluish-green) coat, while the nuchal band and all the under surface are white, instead of being buff-coloured as in the *H. sanctus*. Should the examination of a series of specimens from Western Australia prove the bird to be a new or Western variety, I venture to suggest for it the name of *H. westralasianus*. The following are the dimensions in inches of a male of both kinds:—

H. sanctus.—Length, 8; bill, 1.45; wing, 3.55; tail, 2.25.

H. westralasianus.—Length, 8.5; bill, 1.6; wing, 3.7; tail, 2.4.

A correspondent while Quail shooting near Melbourne during midwinter (July) flushed a Pipit (*Anthus australis*) from a newly-hatched clutch of young.

* "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," p. 621.

† Proc. Roy. Soc. Vict., vol. iii. (new ser.), p. 4.

‡ Proc. Roy. Soc. S.A., vol. xxii., p. 169.

"Astray" for 77 years! Recently (April, 1901) I described a black and white Malurus (*M. edouardi*) in the *Victorian Naturalist*. Since I have been induced to refer to Quoy and Gaimard's original figure of *M. leucopterus*, which Gould queried, and substituted for the species his own blue and white figure (vol. iii., pl. 25). This transposition was apparently accepted as being correct by the "British Museum Catalogue" (vol. iv., p. 290). In Quoy and Gaimard's figure I at once recognized a generally fair drawing of *edouardi*. Should the black and white Wrens of Barrow Island and Dirk Hartog Island (isolated localities about 500 miles apart) eventually prove the same species, then after a lapse of 77 years the real *M. leucopterus* has been re-discovered, while Gould's long-standing provisional *M. cyanotus* will become the proper name for the blue and white bird.

A. J. C.

* * *

DR. CHARLES RYAN, when out quail-shooting, near Melbourne, the season just closed, captured a number of Plain Wanderers. In one day he caught six. The Wanderers squatted so closely (sometimes on the bare ground without any cover) before the dogs that the Doctor had only to drop his hat on the sitting bird. The captives, which are exceedingly tame, have been divided among some private aviaries, where the birds exhibit indications of breeding.

* * *

MR. E. D. BARNARD, about the middle of July, found near Gladstone, Queensland, a nest containing eggs of the Spotted Ground Bird (*Cinclosoma punctatum*). Surely a northern range and an early season for this species.

* * *

"PAINTED FINCHES (*Emblema picta*) have been quite common lately (June)."—Tom Carter, Point Cloates, W.A.

From Magazines.

A CORRESPONDENT in a recent number of *The Ibis* chronicles the fact that the Rhinoceros or Buffalo Bird (*Buphaga*) has earned the vernacular name sometimes applied to it (Beef Bird) by combining with its old quest for insects on the skins of cattle, &c., an attack on the bodies of the beasts. It is now, like the Kea of New Zealand, a flesh-eater. It would be interesting in such a case to discover why the change of habit took place. The only change of environment apparent at first sight is the substitution of sheep, oxen, &c., for the native fauna, and for many years after the introduction of these animals the *Buphaga* was looked upon with favour by the settlers. Its bad habits are of recent growth.

* * *