

## From Magazines, &c.

IN *The Zoologist* (November, 1902) Mr. Frank M. Littler, of Launceston, contributes a chatty article on "The Lesser White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina hyperleuca*)."  
Some of his interesting remarks regarding this species are embodied in another article—"Notes on Some Birds Peculiar to Tasmania"—which will appear in *The Emu* shortly.

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IN the October (1902) number of *The Ibis* Dr. P. L. Sclater contributes an article on "Remarks on two Lately-described Australian Birds," with two beautiful plates. The species

referred to are *Eremiornis carteri* and *Platycercus* (*Barnardius*) *macgillivrayi*, both originally described by Mr. A. J. North, C.M.Z.S., in *Victorian Naturalist* (1900).

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THE *Report on the British Museum (Natural History)* for 1901 states that in the Bird-section the total number of specimens added was 19,743. Those of Australasian interest were:—Collection of birds and eggs from the Antarctic (*Southern Cross*) Expedition, presented by Sir Geo. Newnes; the type of *Eremiornis carteri* from Western Australia, presented by Mr. T. Carter; three birds and six eggs, also from Western Australia, presented by Mr. B. H. Woodward; 220 nests and eggs from Victoria, presented by the Government of Victoria; 124 birds from the New Zealand region, including the type of the *Phalacrocorax ranfurlyi*, presented by the Earl of Ranfurly.

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THE RED-BROWED FINCH, &c.—Under the title "The Australian Waxbill," which he says is the name given by the Zoological Society, Mr. Reginald Phillipps, Secretary of the Avicultural Society, has contributed to science some further notes on this bird, for the successful breeding of which in Great Britain he has received his society's medal. A point of interest in his notes in the *Avicultural Magazine* (vol. viii., No. 12, p. 290) is how he prepared a nesting place. "In the centre of the aviary there is a lime tree. Last year, instead of cutting the shoots, I twisted them round and round and in and out, and in the early opening of the year I continued the process, thus forming a really good platform some 3 feet long by nearly 2 broad, on which the birds might comfortably build their nests." The first nest came to naught, the poor birds being either flooded out or discomfited by cold, and on 19th June the birds were rebuilding in the same tree; but it was not until 31st July that Mr. Phillipps was certain that the young had been reared. He says the immature may "readily be distinguished from adult birds by their black bills, the absence of the red brow-stripe, and their generally duller appearance. They are little dull birds with a tinge of olive above, lighter below, with just a little red in the region of the upper tail-coverts. But they are not uniform in the shade of their body colouring, some being darker than others, presumably a sexual distinction." On 10th September the three young birds were "all slowly coming into colour." This confirms Mr. A. J. Campbell's observations on the same point. A domestic incident is thus related:—"On the 19th of June the male flew on a high, thin perch with a feather nearly as large as himself in his bill. He was at once joined by the female, and pairing, presumably unsuccessful, followed. The pairing was repeated, and the two birds dropped

into the shrubbery and disappeared. From first to last, during the whole time they remained in sight, the male retained the feather in his bill." On 29th August a similar occurrence was observed. In the same number of the magazine cited there is given another instance of a young brood (Gouldian Finches this time) feeding a second and younger brood (p. 303).

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**MALURUS CYANEUS.**—How this Blue Wren was bred in captivity was described by Mr. R. Phillipps in a preceding number of the *Avicultural Magazine*, and some of his remarks on the habits of the birds, &c., quoted on p. 179 of *The Emu*. Mr. H. Grönvold has since sketched parents and young, and the coloured reproduction is well worth preserving. The pose of the birds is exceedingly good. As the young bird grew it and its mother "were inseparable, hunting, feeding, and cuddling together, for they had been absolutely deserted by the male. . . . Had he a touch of migratory fever, or was the old villain thinking of a certain fair damsel, hitherto referred to in these pages as the spinster aunt, who . . . had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared? Is this, then, the secret of the reputed polygamy of the Blue Wren? Is it his custom, after nesting with one wife, to hand all care of the young brood, when fairly independent, over to her, and himself start afresh with spinster aunt No. 2, and so on until he has reared a brood by all of the three or four spinster aunts, one after the other, in due order and succession?" "They seem to be wholly insectivorous." Some of what Mr. Phillipps has to say *re* their change of plumage is quoted elsewhere. He has been awarded a medal for successfully breeding them for the first time.

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**SATIN BOWER-BIRDS.**—Some experiences with three pairs of these birds (one of the hens did not live long) are valuable as throwing further light on their habits. One noticeable fact is that the male parent had not assumed his full adult garb when the young were hatched. Mrs. Johnstone, of Bury St. Edmunds, England, says (*Avicultural Magazine*, vol. i., No. 2, new series) she had the birds in a garden aviary wherein were wild rhododendron bushes, from 3 ft. to 10 ft. high, in profusion, and plenty of sticks. A bower was made and frequented by all five birds. The first nest was in a rhododendron bush, about 36 ft. from the bower; this was pulled to pieces and reconstructed. It was only frequented by the one pair of birds, and the male drove all intruders away. On the completion of the nest (7th June) the hen began to sit. She was seen carrying mealworms to the young for the first time on 28th June, "and from that until 29th July, when the young birds left the nest, she was kept busy, as

almost the entire work of bringing them up devolved upon her. She brooded the young very closely at first . . . but she would never feed them when anyone was watching, and would patiently wait with her mouth full of mealworms until the aviary was free from intruders." The young, on emerging from the nest, looked "very like young Thrushes with violet eyes. They were fed all day by their devoted mother, and occasionally moved from bough to bough, but they did not look lively or very happy." They died within a few days.