

Review.

CATALOGUE OF BIRDS' EGGS.

["Catalogue of the Collection of Birds' Eggs in the British Museum (Natural History). Vol. ii.—Carinatae (Charadriiformes—Strigiformes)."] By Eugene W. Oates. London: Printed by order of the Trustees, 1902. 8vo, pp. i.-xx., 1-400.)

IN the second volume of this valuable work of reference, which is now available; the high standard of work which was noticed in *The Emu* (vol. ii., pp. 38-41) in connection with the first volume has been maintained. With such resources as the Trustees of the British Museum have at command, nothing less was to be expected. In the second volume Mr. Oates has continued his conscientious labours by describing in 342 pages the eggs of Plovers, Cranes, Ibises, Ducks and Geese, the Cormorant family, Hawks, Owls, &c., in all 726 species, of which number about 110 are Australian, one being described for the first time, namely, *Notophox flavirostris* (Sharpe), or the Pied Egret of Gould. The egg was from the Gould Collection, and bore the data, "North Australia." Embodied in the volume are an appendix of 36 pages and 15 coloured plates (Mr. H. Grönvold and Messrs. Pawson and Brailsford, artist and lithographers respectively). These plates include figures of the eggs of the following Australian species, namely:—*Aegialitis cucullata* (Hooded Dottrel), *Ochthodromus geoffroyi* (Large Sand-Dottrel), *Peltohyas australis* (Dottrel), *Notophox novæ-hollandiæ* (White-fronted Heron), *Phaeton æthereus* (Tropic-Bird), *Astur cruentus* (Lesser Goshawk), *Astur approximans* (Goshawk), *Elanus scriptus* (Letter-winged Kite). Where the whole work is so excellent, it is hard to pick a fault. One point in connection with the coloured plates is worth mention, however. If the egg figured as that of the Australian Dottrel belongs to that species at all—which is doubtful—it certainly is not a typical specimen. The information given as to its place of collection must surely be wrong also—"Victoria, Australia—Gould Coll." can hardly refer to a bird which has not been known to breed so far south. If the egg really formed part of the Gould Collection, is it possible that during the time that collector visited these parts some exceptional season induced these Dottrels to depart from their usual habits?

The Coloured Plate.

WITH this issue the Council of the Aust. O.U. has pleasure in being able to furnish, thanks chiefly to the donors of the "Coloured Figure Fund," the first coloured plate (No. X.), depicting three beautiful and rare Wrens (*Maluri*), namely:—*M. elizabethæ* (Campbell),* *M. whitei* (Campbell),† and *M.*

* *Ibis*, p. 10 (1901).† *Emu*, vol. i., p. 65 (1902).

assimilis (North).* Members cannot fail to appreciate the pretty poses and realistic colouration of the birds by Mr. H. Grönvold and Messrs. Mintern Bros., artist and printers respectively. The best thanks of the Union are also due to our member, Mr. D. Seth-Smith, F.Z.S., who most enthusiastically undertook the supervision of the production of the plate in London, and from whom the following interesting note has been received :—"I showed the skins to Dr. Bowdler Sharpe the other day, and we compared them with those in the National Collection. He considers *M. elizabethæ* and *M. whitei* to be good species, but cannot see where *M. assimilis* differs from *M. lamberti*."

In justice to Mr. North, it may be mentioned that it is quite possible that Dr. Sharpe's reference may have been a skin of the inland or western form of *lamberti*, which it is contended is *assimilis*, differing in shade of colouring from the true *lamberti* from the eastern coast.