

welcomed. The pages of the journal are open for Mr. North's criticisms *in extenso* if he will permit the hon. secretary of the Adelaide Association to forward them to the editors of *The Emu*. In any case ornithologists would like a reference for the alleged prior claim of *Acanthiza zietzi* over *A. halmaturina*. And it will be observed that, while deprecating the "hair-splitting" of species in the Union's report, Mr. North has himself, apparently on even more slender grounds, suggested the separation of the Island species of *Platycercus elegans* from the mainland form. However, these differences of opinion will, no doubt, be welcomed as expert evidence by the committee of the proposed Australian "Check-List" when its labours commence.

Obituary Notice.

THE LATE SIR WALTER BULLER, K.C.M.G.

ALL naturalists, more particularly Australian, were deeply moved when they learned that Sir Walter Buller, New Zealand's great native-born ornithologist, had passed away, somewhat suddenly, in London, where he had just completed a two-volume supplement to "The History of the Birds of New Zealand," his beloved country. His life came to full fruition, and his mission, so far as ornithology is concerned, was completed by the issue of the supplement—a work which for all time will remain a standard authority.

The memorial services in connection with the deceased ornithologist took place at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on Thursday, 19th July, in the Chapel of the Order of St. Michael and St. George, of which Sir Walter Buller was a Knight Commander. The services, which were attended by many notable New Zealanders then in London, were conducted by the Ven. Dr. Sinclair, Archdeacon of London and Honorary Chaplain to the King.

Sir Walter Buller's ornithological work has made an enduring name for him throughout the civilised world. As early as 1865 he obtained the silver medal of the New Zealand Exhibition for an "Essay on the Ornithology of New Zealand." In recognition of his researches in the bird-life of his colony, and on the publication, in 1875, of his splendidly illustrated work, "The History of the Birds of New Zealand," he was created C.M.G. The year following he was elected F.R.S. on the same account. In 1882 he prepared for the Government a "Manual of the Birds of New Zealand," and in 1888 brought out a second edition of his standard work.

From *The Lyttelton Times*, 21st July, 1906, we learn that Sir Walter Buller was a son of the late Rev. James Buller.

"He was born on 9th October, 1838, at Newark, Bay of Islands, New Zealand, and was educated at Wesley College, Auckland. Having early acquired a knowledge of the Maori language, he was appointed Government interpreter at Wellington in 1855, and started and edited a weekly Maori paper called *Te Karere o Poneke*. In 1859 he was made Native Commissioner for the southern provinces, and carried through the partition and individualisation of the Kaiapoi native reserve. In 1861 he acted as honorary secretary to the Kohimarama conference of native chiefs, convened by Governor Gore Browne, and in the same year edited the *Maori Messenger*, a fortnightly paper in English and Maori, being afterwards also promoter and editor of the *Maori Intelligencer* (both of them Government publications). In April, 1862, he was appointed Resident Magistrate of the Manawatu; and in April, 1865, Judge of the Native Land Court. In the same year he was present at the taking of Wereroa Pah (Volunteer staff), for which he received the New Zealand war medal. On that occasion, declining the protection of a military escort, he carried the Governor's despatches at night through forty miles of the enemy's country, attended only by a Maori orderly, for which gallant service he was mentioned in despatches. In 1866 he became Resident Magistrate and sheriff of Wanganui, which office he held till 1871, when he went to England as secretary to the Agent-General. For a continuous period of fifteen years he had held various official appointments, chiefly in connection with native affairs, and had on eight different occasions received the special thanks of the Colonial Government. He entered as a student at the Inner Temple on 20th November, 1871, and was called to the bar on 6th June, 1874. In the same year he returned to New Zealand, and practised as a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court with remarkable success till 1886, when he visited England as Commissioner in connection with the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. For his services on this occasion he was created K.C.M.G. Sir Walter remained in England till 1890, and took an active part in all public movements affecting the colonies. He was on the Mansion House committee for the Paris Exhibition of 1889, and was elected a member of the Executive Council. For his services on that occasion he was decorated 'Officer' in the Legion of Honour. Besides enjoying the dignity of a British order, Sir Walter was a Knight (First Class) Austrian Order of Francis Joseph, First Class Order of Frederick of Württemberg, Order of Merit (First Class) of Hesse-Darmstadt, and Officier de l'Instruction Publique (Gold Palm of the Academy). He was awarded the Galileian Medal by the Royal University of Florence, and received the honorary degree of Doctor of Science from the University of Tübingen. In 1881 he received the gold medal of the New Zealand Exhibition for science and literature, and was elected a governor of the New Zealand Institute, of which he was also one of the founders. He married, in 1862, Charlotte, third daughter of Mr. Gilbert Mair, of Auckland, who died on 1st November, 1891. For some years Sir Walter had lived in England. He leaves two sons and a married daughter, Mrs. Madocks, wife of Major Madocks, who distinguished himself as a member of the first New Zealand Contingent in South Africa."

So many problems as to Australasian ornithology remain to be solved that we can ill spare such a man. It is to be hoped that (perhaps not among the native-born) another ornithologist will be found to do work on the same lines, and thus not necessarily replace, but succeed, our departed friend. His work was unique, beset with more difficulties in its accomplishment than any successor will have to encounter, and the debt of science to him can never be paid. Those who come after have

still a good field, but a stupendous task if they would do better—one worthy of all endeavour. What Sir Walter Buller did for science is his best memorial.

South Australian Ornithological Association.

THE ordinary meeting of the association was held at the residence of Dr. A. M. Morgan on the evening of the 3rd August, the president, Mr. J. W. Mellor, being in the chair. The chairman drew attention to the movement on foot for the formation of a reserve on Kangaroo Island as a national park for the total protection of fauna and flora. Mr. J. W. Mellor and Capt. S. A. White reported having identified a number of species of native birds at the Reedbeds this winter, some of which were rare visitors. They gave interesting notes upon the early breeding habits of some birds this season. A discussion took place on the protection of the European Goldfinch (*Fringilla carduelis*) and the European Blackbird (*Turdus merula*). Good points were accorded to both species, but it was unanimously agreed that their destructiveness was in excess of their usefulness. Dr. A. M. Morgan showed an interesting early ornithological volume, "A General Synopsis of Birds," by the late Dr. Latham, written in 1783. The chairman produced a volume of interesting photographs of Kangaroo Island fauna and flora, recently presented to him by the Council of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union, in recognition of services rendered in connection with the leadership of the recent expedition to Kangaroo Island. Mr. F. R. Zietz exhibited the Broad-billed Petrel (*Prion vittatus*), which had been found near Adelaide; also a specimen of a near ally, the Dove-Petrel (*Prion desolatus*). Mr. A. H. C. Zietz, F.L.S., in conjunction with Mr. E. Ashby, displayed a large collection of Kangaroo Island birds and their allies of the mainland to illustrate a paper sent by Mr. A. J. North, F.L.S., of the Sydney Museum, in criticism of new names given by Mr. A. G. Campbell* to several birds recently found on Kangaroo Island by the A.O.U.'s expedition. Mr. North also kindly forwarded a number of type specimens from the Sydney Museum, which were valuable for purposes of comparison. The debate on the subject was adjourned to a special meeting, so that the specimens may be examined in daylight.

Bird Observers' Club.

THE July meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the residence of Mr. Donald Macdonald, Balaclava. The host presided, and there was a good attendance of members. The subject for the evening's discussion was "Shore Birds," including Plovers, Dottrels, Sandpipers, Snipe, &c., of which a fine series of skins was shown by Mr. A. G. Campbell, who pointed out the distinguishing marks by which the various species might be identified. Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., exhibited a series of eggs, and also gave a lantern lecture illustrating the protective colouration of the eggs and young of various shore birds. It was resolved to elect 25 corresponding members in the country districts of Victoria.

The August meeting of the Bird Observers' Club was held at the residence of Mr. J. A. Ross, South Yarra. The host was voted to the chair, and there were about 12 members present. After Mr. Ross's numerous trophies and medals for rifle shooting had been admired, several carefully compiled lists of the birds of the Cheltenham district were laid on the table and collated by members. It was found that well over 100 different birds frequented the

* "Report on Birds of Kangaroo Island: a Comparison with Mainland Forms," *Emu*, vol. v., pp. 139-145.