

Stray Feathers.

CAPT. A. Simpson states that in the latitudes he usually steams between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia, he has noticed of late years, from whatever cause, a decrease in the number of Cape Petrels (*Daption capensis*) generally seen on that track.—A.J.C.

* * *

NEST AND EGG OF PARADISEA RAGGIANA.—The nest and egg of this beautiful bird were found in southern New Guinea last December, and were forwarded to Mr. Atlee Hunt to add to his interesting ornithological collection from New Guinea. The loosely-built nest was built in a fork of a thickly-foliaged ficus-tree, and is composed outwardly of rather coarse rootlets and vines, in which are embedded large leaves; the lining is composed of fine dark-coloured rootlets and tendrils. The measurements are:—Outside depth, 5 inches; depth of nesting depression, 2 inches; outside breadth, 7 inches; and breadth of nesting depression, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches. The egg is much elongated, and was fresh when found, only one being in the nest. Its ground colour is cream, with light reddish-brown and brownish-purple streaks and dashes of varying length, mostly starting from just below the apex of the larger end. The egg measures .94 inches by 1.70 inches.—D. LE SOUËF. Melbourne. (See Plate IV.)

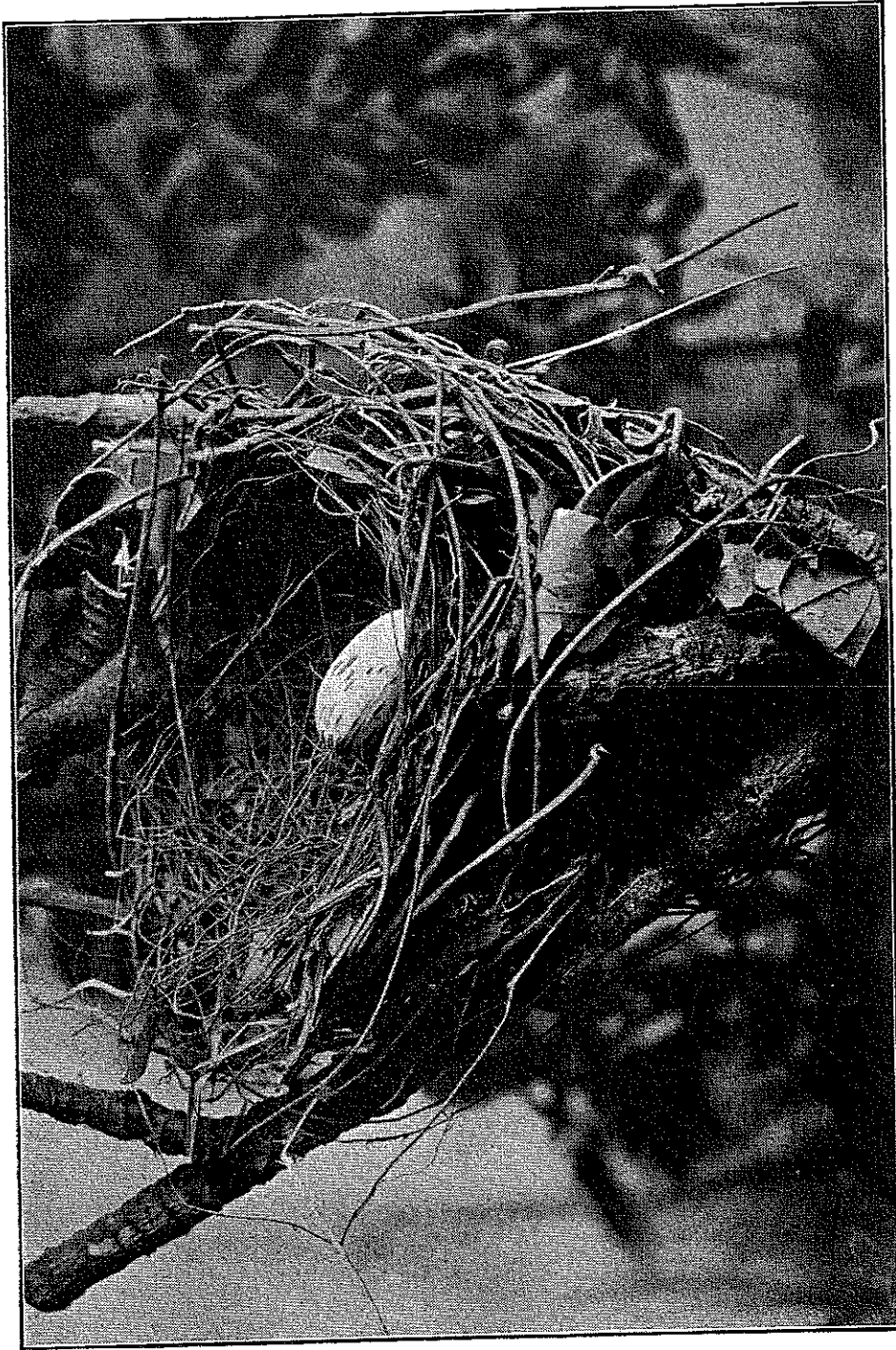
* * *

THE RED WATTLE-BIRD (*Acanthochæra carunculata*).—On account of the early flowering of the various eucalypts, these birds have arrived here over a month earlier than last year. Although the main body of the "Wattles" has not yet arrived, the birds are very plentiful about the bush, and their numbers are being added to daily. It would be interesting to know how the birds learnt of the early flowering of the trees. I notice they do not confine themselves to a honey diet, but may be seen ever and anon darting after various insects. The blossoms of the iron-bark (*Eucalyptus*) trees are specially favoured by these birds. During their autumnal visits the "Wattles" are generally accompanied by a good number of Warty-faced Honey-eaters (*Meliphaga phrygia*), but these pretty birds have not, as yet, put in an appearance, though there are dozens of the smaller Honey-eaters and a few Lorikeets.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vict.), 8/5/08.

* * *

SPOTTED BOWER-BIRD. — The following notes on the Spotted Bower-Bird (*Chlamydodera maculata*), culled from a letter from a bird-observer living up in the heart of Western Queensland, will be of interest. My friend writes:—"One of

PLATE IV.



Nest and Egg of the Marquis Raggis Bird of Paradise (*Paradisaea raggiana*). In the collection of Mr. Atlee Hunt, Melbourne.

FROM A PHOTO. BY D. LE SOUEF.

the most curious traits of the Spotted Bower-Bird is the great variety of noises emitted by them if their nest be disturbed. As you know, they are great mimics, and when disturbed from their nests they will sit somewhere near (often in the same tree) and make the most life-like noises imaginable—some faithfully imitating wild cattle running in the scrub,* others resembling branches of trees creaking and breaking, and many other startling sounds calculated to draw the attention of the intruder away from the nest. The egg-robber naturally stops to see where the cattle are coming from. The sounds cease; then, as he again climbs towards the nest, they break out afresh, until, at last locating them, the bird is seen close above in the boughs. The nest is a frail structure of twigs, generally placed in a branch of mistletoe, though I once found one in the fork of a dog-wood tree.”—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Victoria), 8/5/08.

* * *

ZOSTEROPS CŒRULESCENS NESTING.—Though their general nesting months are October to December, the White-eyes are not very exact in this respect. During the past season, I found one nest as early as August, and another as late as January. The favoured spot for the nest is generally in a fruit tree, at a height of about 6 feet from the ground, but, in the former case, the nest was placed in a “monkey-nut,” at a height of over 20 feet.

In connection with this bird we discovered rather a peculiar and pathetic little tragedy in the garden the other day. A White-eye had built its nest in one of the pear-trees, and, instead of the usual building material (fibres, grasses, &c.), it had constructed the nest almost wholly of cotton and fine string. While this novel building material made a very neat domicile, it was the direct cause of the disaster referred to, for in sitting on the nest, the unfortunate little bird had by some mischance got its feet hopelessly entangled in the twine. All its struggles failing to release it, the unnoticed little victim had slowly perished. When found there was nothing but a few feathers and a bleaching skeleton, with the feet still stuck fast in the bottom of the nest.—A. H. CHISHOLM. Maryborough (Vict.)

* * *

SWALLOWS AND SWIFTS.—A friend in Launceston, Tasmania, Mr. H. C. Thompson, A.O.U., wrote me in March that on the second day of that month there was a great mustering of Tree-Martins (*Petrochelidon nigricans*) about the wharves on the Tamar, the birds settling on the rigging of the small vessels

* See also “Nests and Eggs” (Campbell), p. 201, 2nd par.—EDS.

moored there, also on the piles which have been driven into the swampy flat. It is very unusual to see this species in quantity about in the town, as it usually keeps away in small companies along the river or among the trees of the bush. They appear to have reached northern Tasmania in much larger numbers than usual during the past spring and summer, as a friend of Mr. Thompson's who lives out some miles from the city on a sheep-run, and who also is a keen observer, found that the Tree-Swallow had driven the ordinary Swallows (*Hirundo neoxena*) from their nests under his verandah, and, having lined the nests with gum leaves, had proceeded to lay and incubate therein. Mr. Thompson saw a clutch of their eggs from this place; they were three in number, and he describes them as much rounder than those of the Swallow and very prettily marked. This proceeding of ousting the *Hirundo* from its mud structure and usurping the same for breeding purposes is most unusual with the *Petrochelidon*, as far as our experience goes. Within my own knowledge, it always bred, on the North-West Coast, high up in holes of dead gum-trees, and never seemed to care for the proximity of a town, thus differing *in toto* from the other species.

Spine-tailed Swift (*Chaetura caudacuta*).—This fine bird has the peculiarity in some seasons of not making its appearance across the Strait until the end of summer. I have seen them from Mt. Bischoff, after a storm, up very high in the air, dashing along in their splendid strong flight, in the month of February, none having been noted previously. Mr. Thompson had not observed any this season when he wrote at the end of February, but on the 15th March he saw two pairs over the Cataract Hill, in showery weather with a north-east wind. After circling over the hill for some time they made away to the south.—H. STUART DOVE. Moonee Ponds, 27/5/08.

Forgotten Feathers.

BY J. R. M'CLYMONT, M.A., HOBART.

THE DERIVATION OF THE WORD PENGUIN AND THE BIRD DENOTED BY THE NAME PIJLSTAERT.—“Penguin” may come to us from Latin through French, either from *pinguis*, fat, or from *pingue*, fat between the skin and the flesh. There are two forms of the word in French—*pinguin* and *pingouin*. The final *in* is merely a substantival and adjectival affix. *Pingui* is employed by François Pyrard, whose *Discours du voyage des François aux Indes Orientales* was published in Paris in 1611, but it is evident from the context that he does not designate a Penguin by this name. Clusius, whose *Exoticorum libri decem* was published in 1605, employs *Pinguins* as if it were late