

Correspondence.

DERIVATION OF THE WORD PINGVIN.

To the Editors of "The Emu."

DEAR SIRs,—In *The Emu*, vol. viii., page 39, Mr. J. R. M'Clymont, M.A., publishes an interesting note on the derivation of the word "*Pinguin*." He states that it is either derived from the Latin word *pinguis*, fat, or that it is a Dutch word, because it was used before 1595 in a narrative of the first expedition of the Dutch to the Eastern Archipelago, where *Pinguins* (printed *Pinguyns*) are mentioned.*

I have, during the last 10 years, taken up the study of the Tasmanian aborigines, and in the course of my studies I found it necessary to refer to the vocabularies of the Tasmanian language that have been handed over to us. I was surprised to see what an enormous mass of information these vocabularies contain, but it does not appear that much use has been made of it. In connection with a paper, "On the Antiquity of Man in Tasmania," which will be published shortly, I had to make some calculations with regard to the shell-heaps, which led into further researches regarding the food of the aborigines. For this reason I extracted from the vocabularies the names of all animals, birds, &c., and plants that were distinguished by the aborigines, and to my surprise 130 different species could be discovered. These 130 words represent about 15 per cent. of the known words of the Tasmanian language. More surprising is the number of birds that were distinguished by special names. Fifty-three different birds are recorded, and among these is the Penguin. Milligan, in his vocabulary of the Tasmanian language, gives (page 39) the following words for Penguin:—Tribes from Oyster Bay to Pittwater (eastern tribes)—Penguin (*Spheniscus minor*), Tomen-yenna. Tribes about Mount Royal, Bruni Island (southern tribes)—Teng-wynne, or Ngavaredekah. The first† and the last word do not concern us, but the similarity between the words "Penguin" and "Teng-wynne" is so striking that it is difficult to believe in a mere coincidence. Tasmania was not discovered before November, 1642, yet Mr. M'Clymont has clearly shown that the word *Pinguin* occurs in a Dutch publication of 1597. We must assume that either Tasmania was discovered by a stray Dutch navigator long before Abel Tasman sighted it, or that the Tasmanian word represents a link with other languages hitherto unsuspected. I think that the first theory is very improbable. I rather feel inclined to think

* I am greatly indebted to Mr. Robert Hall, C.M.Z.S., who drew my attention to this interesting note.

† There is no doubt also a great similarity between Tomen-yenna and Teng-wynne, particularly if we consider that the suffix "na" or "ne" has no special meaning. "Tomenyn" and "Tengwyn" are unquestionably very similar.

that we are on the track of a very peculiar connection of the Tasmanians with the outside world. All those students who have carefully gone into the subject of the origin of the Tasmanian race agree that they came from the north—that is to say, from Australia, which they inhabited previous to the advent of the present Australian aborigines. We may also take it as certain that the Tasmanians were not an autochthonous race, but migrated to Australia from somewhere else. Where from is a problem for the present, but it may be quite probable that the name, Teng-wynne, of that peculiar wingless bird lingered in the language of other tribes that followed the Tasmanian race in their old homes. If it could be conclusively proved that the word *Pinguin* was used for the Great Auk before 1595—that is to say, before the Dutch came in contact with the Penguins of Agua or Sam Brás—and that the name of this peculiar wingless bird is an indigenous one of the northern hemisphere, the result would be of the greatest importance.

In conclusion, I wish to point out another very peculiar fact. According to Milligan, the southern tribes called the large Owl (*Strix castanops*) Kokatah or Rrukah, while of those birds which we now call Cockatoo the white was named Weeanoo-bryna or Oiynoo-bryna by the southern and 'Nghara or Oorah by the eastern tribes; the black was called Menuggana by the eastern and 'Nghayrumma or Nearipah by the southern tribes. It would therefore appear that the word Cockatoo is of Tasmanian origin, and that, by one of those peculiar changes that frequently take place when a foreign word is adopted by another language, it denotes now a bird quite different from the one it originally meant.—I am, &c.,

FRITZ NOETLING, M.A., Ph.D.

Hobart, 26/11/09.

A STANDARD COLOUR-CHART.

To the Editors of "*The Emu*."

DEAR SIRs,—It affords me great pleasure to be able to announce that the urgent "need for a universal and uniform method of describing the colour of birds' plumage and soft parts and their eggs," to which Mr. Mattingley calls attention in the July number of *The Emu*, is soon to be supplied. Such a work, upon which the writer has been intermittently engaged for the past 20 years, is completed, and the plates are now being reproduced by a method which guarantees absolute uniformity throughout an edition of any number of copies.

The work in question ("Standards and Nomenclature of Colours") will embody all the special features described by Mr. Mattingley, besides others. My own experience of more than 40 years as an ornithologist has been seriously handicapped by

the want of an adequate colour nomenclature, and I therefore feel qualified to know the exact requirements of the case, to meet which and produce a work indispensable to all naturalists, and many others besides, no labour nor expense has been spared.

The new work will present about 1,350 colour samples, arranged after a scientific system, no two of them so nearly alike that the normal eye cannot easily discern the difference. These are named as far as practicable; but, it being obviously impossible to name all of so large a number, an exceedingly simple system of numerals and symbols has been devised, enabling the user to very easily and quickly designate not only any colour actually shown, but also the intermediates, both as to hue and tone. The very large proportion of dull or "broken" colours—the various-coloured browns, greys, &c.—are a conspicuous feature. The size of the book will be about $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$ inches, and the price about \$5 net.—Very truly yours,

ROBERT RIDGWAY.

Washington, D.C., 11th September, 1909.

Death of Dr. Richard Bowdler Sharpe.

MEMBERS of the A.O.U. will much regret to learn of the death of a distinguished ornithologist and one of its honorary members—Dr. R. Bowdler Sharpe, F.R.S. A full account of his ornithological career, together with a portrait, will appear in the next issue of *The Emu*. Dr. Sharpe took a keen interest in the affairs of the A.O.U., as is evinced by a recent letter received by one of the editors of *The Emu* from the deceased ornithologist:—

"I shall be very grateful to you if you will send me part 4 of vol. vii. of *The Emu*. I have never received it, and it seems to have miscarried. To be without a part of *The Emu*, and to have my set incomplete, is a thing too dreadful to contemplate.

"I have lately been going through the whole of *The Emu* with Dr. Godman, picking up the threads, and seeing whether anything has been left out in his 'Monograph.' Will you allow me the following criticisms which occur to me?

"Taking it as a whole, and considering that it is a new venture, I find *The Emu* wonderfully well managed and edited—a most creditable achievement for the ornithologists who have piloted it to success.

"I think some of the titles are a little spun out. For instance (*Emu* vii., p. 142), Legge's paper, 'Some Notes on the Location of Birds,' &c., &c., could be simply 'On Birds of Homesteads, Tasmania,' leaving the reader to see in the text that Homesteads was in the Break-o'-Day district.*

"This criticism does not go for much, but some of the titles are a little long.

* Dr. Sharpe appears to have been under a misapprehension that, in Colonel Legge's article, "Homesteads" was the name of a place. —EDS.