

western side of the narrow timber track, as the heaps of *débris* it daily frequented were on the eastern side, and are all shown on the plan and marked "A," "B," "C," "D," and "E," and these include Nos. 1 and 2 masses. I obtained a still better view of the male *Atrichornis* to-day, when it was feeding on the ground in No. 2 mass of *débris*, and I watched it for 3 or 4 moments, ready if the female appeared. The spot is shown on the plan by the figure 9.

I still continued to visit the locality, and examined numerous places and turned over numbers of large sheets of loose curled pine bark (see plan), in hopes of finding No. 2 nest. I often sat on top of the remaining parts of No. 2 mass of *débris* and other heaps for hours with gun ready, sometimes in pouring rain, waiting to get a shot at the female *Atrichornis*; but I never saw her again during my visit. Failing to procure her after having seen her several times was very tantalizing, and it was now my painful duty to shoot the male in order that my find of the nest be thoroughly authenticated, because there are sceptics even amongst naturalists. On the 4th December the opportunity came, and I have the body of this wonderful feathered mimic preserved in formalin. The eyes are dark brown, with a jet black centre. The wings are unusually small, and when folded have the same appearance as those of the Lyre-Bird. The legs are strong, and, strange to say, the three front toes of the right foot were missing, evidently having been lost for some time by accident.

From personal observations, and from the evidence of other persons who have also investigated the matter, this remarkable bird is fast becoming scarcer. What is to be learnt of its natural economy should be done soon, or it will be too late.

[Members will appreciate the art and technique of Mr. Jackson's excellent illustrations. Thanks are also due to Mr. H. L. White for his goodness in defraying the cost of the blocks, so finely engraved by Messrs. Patterson, Shugg and Co.—Eds.]

Notes on the Mallee Emu-Wren.

By F. E. HOWE, F.Z.S., MELBOURNE.

THE Mallee Emu-Wren (*Stipiturus mallee*, Campbell) is an inhabitant of the vast tracts of porcupine grass in the Mallee, in the north-west corner of Victoria, and doubtless extends its range to similar country in South Australia. The species was described by Mr. A. J. Campbell.* In company with Messrs. J. A. Ross, A. Mattingley, and C. M'Lennan, I first made its acquaintance near Wonga, about 25 miles east of Hopetoun, on 22nd September, 1907. A nest was noticed in the heart of a dead porcupine bush, from which the young had already flown. Mr. Ross and I again

* *Emu*, vol. viii., page 34.

met with the species in the same class of country about 70 miles further west, at Kow Plains, during October, 1909, but were unable to secure specimens. In September, 1910, our party was made up of Messrs. J. A. Ross, A. Mattingley, C. F. Cole, and myself. We reached the Mallee on 4th September, but it was not until the 9th that we found the birds, as usual in the porcupine, on a sand-ridge bordering the Kow Plains road, about 38 miles from Ouyen. We saw them all through the spinifex. I saw what I took to be a female fly from a porcupine bush, and as I discharged my gun a male rose to join the female, which was riddled with the shot; the male, however, was perfect.

Mr. Campbell says that this bird is much smaller than *S. malachurus*, and on measuring my specimen in the flesh I made the dimensions (in inches) as follows:—Total length, exactly 5 inches; culmen, $\frac{5}{16}$; wing, $1\frac{3}{8}$; tail, $2\frac{3}{4}$; tarsus, $\frac{5}{8}$. We were unable to secure a specimen of the still undescribed female. Since leaving the locality I have secured a set of three fresh eggs, taken on 18th September, at Underbool, by Messrs. Geo. Dunn and F. Estick.

Description of Nest.—Oval in shape, with the entrance at the side, the opening having the top built out and forming a verandah; outwardly composed of very fine shreds of bark, soft and light-coloured grasses, and the down of thistles and flowering shrubs, and decorated here and there with a few spiders' cocoons. Interior lined with feathers and fur. The nest was placed in the heart of a bunch of porcupine grass (*Triodia*). Dimensions:—Length, 5 inches; breadth, 3 inches; opening, 2 inches long by $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches wide; interior, level with opening to bottom, 1 inch.

Description of Eggs.—Clutch three, oval in shape; texture of shell very fine; surface slightly glossy; colour white, with a pinkish tinge, and moderately blotched or spotted all over with reddish-brown or rufous. The markings are thickest about the larger end, where they form a zone. Dimensions in inches:—(a) .58 x .44, (b) .58 x .44, (c) .56 x .42.

Annotations.

By A. J. CAMPBELL, C.M.B.O.U., MELBOURNE.

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CRATICUS MENTALIS (Black-backed Butcher-Bird).—Through the enterprise of Mr. H. L. White, New South Wales, and the energy of Mr. Harry Barnard, Queensland, this New Guinea species is now established as an Australian bird also. Mr. Barnard observed several of these birds at Lockerbie, Cape York, and discovered a pair breeding, 1/12/10. Mr. White describes these eggs in the next article.

In the "Catalogue of Birds" * (British Museum) *C. spaldingi* †

* Vol. viii., p. 102.

† "Proc. Linn. Soc. N.S.W.," vol. ii., p. 271 (1877).