

Freak Colours of *Rhipidura tricolor*.—For three successive seasons a neighbour has sent me young white birds of the Black-and-White Fantail—rough skins on two occasions, and a live bird on the third. Becoming interested, I obtained some information from him. All the young mentioned appear to have been the progeny of the same birds, which built close to the house, and are normal in colour. They have been under observation for three years, in which time four clutches were reared—two white birds only on three occasions, the fourth clutch consisting of two each white and normal. None of the white birds appears to have lived long after leaving the nest, though during last winter I noticed a pure white one within four miles of my neighbour's house. In some of the white birds a darker shade was observable where the black usually exists. —H. L. WHITE. Belltrees (N.S.W.), 30/11/13.

Notes and Notices.

The late Dr. P. L. Selater, F.R.S. — Owing to unavoidably restricted space, a notice, with portrait, of this late distinguished ornithologist is held over until the next issue of *The Emu*.

A Correction.—In vol. xiii., page 100, of *The Emu*, under the heading "Charcoal in Finches' Nests," I made an error which I wish to rectify. The fact of charcoal being placed in the nests of *Poephila personata* was previously recorded by Mr. G. F. Hill (vol. x., page 289, of *The Emu*). My friend Mr. T. P. Austin, of Cobborah, N.S.W., drew attention to the mistake, he having received a clutch of eggs from me, the data mentioning the fact of charcoal being found in the nest. At the time of writing the note for *The Emu* I was in the midst of shearing, and I presume that my wits must have been "wool-gathering." —H. L. WHITE. Belltrees (N.S.W.), 30/11/13.

Charcoal in Finches' Nests.—In connection with the foregoing "Correction," Mr. G. F. Hill, Darwin, sends the following note, which was accompanied by a photograph of the Finch's nest, *in situ*, in scrub:—"Although this habit is common, if not general, in the species, I do not think it occurs in any other nesting in Northern Territory or North-West Australia. The large size of the pieces of charcoal, 'about the size of the eggs,' is somewhat unusual, I think. The charcoal is generally in the form of powder and small pieces about the size of grains of hemp seed. The habit is not confined to nests built on the ground, but has been observed in nests built in bushes in North-West Australia, also in bushes and on Termites' nests near Roper River, Northern Territory. Since some field notes on the situations chosen by *Poephila personata* for nesting were published in *The Emu* (vol. xii., Part 4, page 260), I have had some opportunities for observing their nesting habits further north (about 20 miles south of Darwin,

Northern Territory), where I find that no partiality is shown for the vicinity of Termites' nests. Records of some 15 nests show that all contained charcoal, and were built on the ground or on tussocks of grass, generally on dry stringy-bark and woolly-butt ridges."

Avium Paradiseum.—The following extract is from a letter dated Cape York, 25/11/13, by Dr. Wm. Macgillivray, one of the vice-presidents, R.A.O.U. :—

"No rain yet, and there will not be any general breeding until the wet season commences. It is unusually dry, and the whole place shows the effects of it, even the scrubs. Birds build their nests only to pull them to pieces again or to desert them. We have taken several nests of *Eclectus*,* but cannot find that of *Pseudopsittacus*.† I have a Honey-eater which is, I think, entirely new. It is small, and lives in the midst of the scrubs. The other day, for a moment or two, I saw a bird like a Regent-Bird, but it dived into the scrub and was gone. I have not seen it since. We have not been into the mountains yet. They are covered with scrub, and stretch for 40 miles, and all well watered. It will take a generation of field naturalists to find all their wealth. There is another Parrot near here, but we have not come across it yet—a black one. *Pseudopsittacus* and *Eclectus* are calling now—one from the opposite side of the creek, where there is a nesting-tree, the other from a food tree just below our camp.

"The scenery along the river here is very beautiful, the scrub overhanging the banks, and a plant with huge palm-like fronds, 40 to 50 feet in length, springing from a common base, grows frequently in clumps in the mud at the water's edge. You may tell any botanical friend that we found a new hoyia, each floret being as large as a half-crown piece, and of a beautiful and delicately-tinted purple hue. When the tide comes up in the evening the surface of the water is strewn with large yellow hibiscus-like blooms of a tree which overhangs the stream; these fade into orange and red, and give the stream a gorgeous appearance. There are drawbacks, the chief of which is the want of rain, an occasional snake in our beds, and the having to bathe in a bucket instead of a swim in the creek, in deference to the appetite of *Crocodilus porosus*. In spite of all, however, existence here is very pleasant, and it is glorious to wake in the morning and hear the multitudinous voices of the birds. The chorus was a babel at first, but the species are sorting themselves out now as our ears become educated to their calls."

"Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds" (Campbell). — This important work, although out of print, retains its value. In nomenclature the names of the birds mostly accord with those on the newly adopted "Check-list" of the R.A.O.U. Price per copy (in two handsome vols.), £3 10s., the last offer at so low a figure for the few reserved copies. Apply Editors, *The Emu*.

* See *ante*, p. 187.

† See *ante*, p. 105.