

grass, and placed in a bunch of spinifex (*Triodia*) growing in rough sandstone country. Outside measurement, 120 mm. x 90 mm.

Eggs, four in number, rather elongated oval in shape; texture of shell smooth, with a little gloss; colour white, with small reddish-brown markings distributed plentifully all over the surface. Measurements in inches:—(a) .61 x .44, (b) .6 x .44, (c) .59 x .42, (d) .59 x .42.

A second clutch contains four eggs, each of which is different in size, shape, and colour, the colour varying from heavy blotches of reddish-brown at the larger end to pure white. In a third clutch, of three eggs, the markings are confined to the larger end, while the eggs are slightly pyriform in shape.

Type clutch taken by H. G. Barnard, 8th January, 1914; locality, Borroloola, Macarthur River, south-west of Gulf of Carpentaria, Northern Territory.

The Young of *Climacteris leucophæa*.

By J. W. MELLOR.

THE young of the White-throated Tree-creeper is not generally known, and even in the early days of ornithology it was mistaken by the noted ornithologist, the late John Gould, for a distinct species; this was rectified later by Mr. A. J. North. Some controversy arose amongst ornithologists at the last R.A.O.U. expedition relative to this bird. A description of the young female from specimens procured by me at Mallacoota, Victoria, during the fourteenth congress expedition of the R.A.O.U. would probably be helpful to ornithology. A notable feature, and one that strikes the observer instantly, is the large patch of bright rufous-brown which extends from a quarter way up the back right down the tail coverts, and forms a conspicuous rufous rump; this is noticeable even in the nestlings, but, I believe, is only found in the young females, for such is my experience with a number of specimens handled. This rufous rump lessens in size and intensity as the bird matures, until it finally disappears, giving place to the slaty-grey colour of the old bird. From specimens now before me I find that the process of changing does not come about by moulting, but by a fading away of the rusty colour and a gradual predominance of the slaty-grey colouration. A bright rusty-brown of the same hue appears just below the ear coverts, and is maintained by the adult female throughout life. The head, neck, and back are of a blackish-brown colour, each feather on the head being narrowly tipped with brown. Those of the mantle have a brownish tip followed by a brownish-black band, and then more brown colouring, giving the bird a somewhat indistinct, freckled appearance. The ear coverts are somewhat coarse and hairy, being blackish-brown with a light brown stripe down the centre of each. The wings are of greyish-brown appearance when closed, the primaries being brownish-black,

with a tinge of grey on the outer webs ; the secondaries are also brownish-black tipped with slaty-grey, the greater wing coverts being of the latter colour. The primaries and secondaries have a bar of very pale rufous-brown crossing them midway, and appearing as a patch, which is conspicuous when the bird has its wings expanded in flight. The tail is slaty-grey, the two central feathers being wholly of that colour, while the others are more or less crossed by a broad band of jet black, leaving the tips and



Young White-throated Tree-creeper.

FROM A PHOTO. BY A. H. E. MATTINGLEY.

bases slaty-grey. The tips have a touch of white on the inner webs, this being more pronounced on the two outer feathers. The under tail coverts are pale whitish-cream, with several spots of black on either side of the feathers, giving them a barred and mottled appearance. The under surface is white on the throat, going into cream on the chest, darkening into dark cream or pale brown down the centre to the abdomen, while the flanks are

blackish-brown, each feather having a stripe of pale cream down the centre. The feathers have a softer and more silky appearance than in the adult bird, and also are lighter on the whole beneath than the full-plumaged female. Iris brown; bill horn; feet light horn.

Cuckoos and their Offspring.

By S. A. HANSCOMBE, R.A.O.U. (SEAHAM, N.S.W.)

ON 28th October, after many days' observations, I succeeded in locating a well-hidden nest of a pair of Buff-tailed Tit-Warblers (*Acanthiza reguloides*). They had successfully eluded me for some days, though I was aware that they had completed their nest. Profiting by earlier experiences, I engaged in observations in the early morning, and found the nest. Many times I had rested beside it. It was safely hidden on the top rail of a paling fence, the paling and the rail holding it securely from wind or weather, while, overhanging the whole, was a large chaff-bag closely fitting over the paling and sapling. The fence was part of the remains of a deserted bush home, and here the old bag had hung for many months.

The opening to the nest was very small, but on inspection one egg was to be seen. On the evening of 29th another egg was there, and on the 30th the nest also held an egg of the Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx plagusius*). There were now certainly only two eggs of *A. reguloides*, and no evidence of any egg having been displaced, but this could have happened, as a colony of ants, a few feet distant, could readily account for the destruction of eggs ejected from the nest.

From further observations I concluded that the parent birds were at work incubating. On 13th November the egg of the intruder had hatched, and the little naked bird was a ball of activity. On the 14th November the other two eggs were still unhatched, but on the 15th both had disappeared. I could see no trace of shell and none of young birds, save the rapidly improving *C. plagusius*. Whether, in its blind twistings and rollings about for food, the latter had ejected either two eggs or two nestlings, I cannot say. Probably the eggs were ejected as "addled" specimens by the birds themselves, as to me it appeared too difficult a task for the young bird to perform. The position of the entrance to the nest leads me to this conclusion. The young Cuckoo grew very rapidly. Two adult Bronze-Cuckoos were always in the immediate neighbourhood, though they certainly never took part in supplying food to the fledgeling. The Tit-Warblers fed the alien with great care and attention till about 9 a.m., when visits slackened, to be renewed again at about 2 p.m., and continue well on to 5 p.m. In ten days the bird had grown wonderfully, and was well plumed, when an accident