

happen to get the worm it might change from bill to bill as many as ten times. Frequently a worm given by one parent to the chick was taken out of its bill by the other and then returned.

On the 31st day small feathers began to replace the down on the shoulders, and a week later the chick's wings were fully feathered. Another week, and the whole body was clad in feathers, dark and light brown, with very little of the grey colour of the adult. At eight weeks the colour had changed to that of the adult, and the bird was half the size of an adult, with a little down just at the base of the bill. It began to pick up food on its own account. In colour the bird resembled the dead, dry leaves, light and dark brown. Visitors frequently were unable to detect the bird as it lay on the nest. No outward appearance in the adult distinguishes the sexes, but in all Kagus which I have owned the eye of the male bird was lighter and brighter in colour than that of the female.

### Stray Feathers.

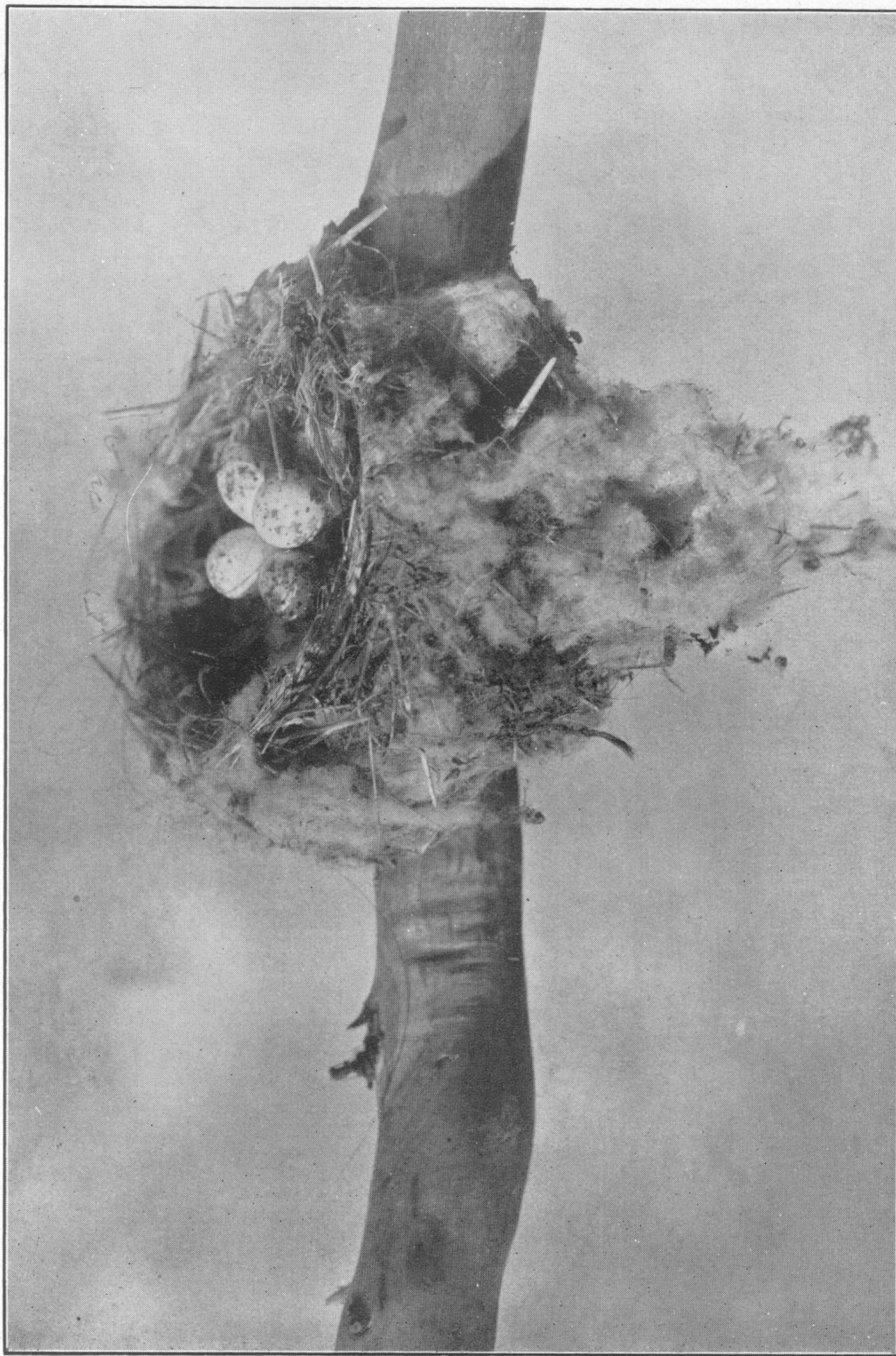
**New Foster-Parent.**—On Monday, 9th November, I found at Ringwood, Vict., a nest of the Spotted-sided Finch (*Stagonopleura guttata*) containing three eggs, together with an egg of the Narrow-billed Bronze-Cuckoo (*Chalcococcyx basalis*). This, I believe, is a new record.—F. ERASMUS WILSON. Melbourne (Vic.), 22/12/14.

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**Rail Caught by Cat.**—This morning an *employé* brought me an egg of the Pectoral Rail (*Hypotaenidia philippensis*) for identification. He recognized a preserved skin of the species at once, and stated that his cat had caught a live bird the evening before. The bird, apparently uninjured, was placed in a cage, laid the egg in question during the night, and was released in the morning.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees, Scone (N.S.W.) 29th October, 1914.

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**Remarkable Grallina's Nest.**—A most extraordinary nest of the Magpie-Lark (*Grallina picata*), probably the result of the present drought, was built more than a mile from any water. The birds were unable to get much mud to build their nest in the usual manner. The foundation was composed of wet (when used) cowdung, the balance feathers, dry grass, and wool from dead sheep, mostly the latter, and just a little clay on the side of the nest in a few places; but, as this clay was of a red colour, it did not come from the Talbragar River (the only water for miles), so I can only conclude that they gathered it at a cattle camp near the nesting-tree, the clay being of the same sort. This appears reasonable, considering that part of their nest had been built with wet cowdung.—THOS. P. AUSTIN. Cobbora Estate, Cobbora (N.S.W.), 3/10/14.



Nest and Eggs of Magpie-Lark.

FROM A PHOTO. BY THOS. P. AUSTIN.

**Island Sanctuaries.**—In a letter received by Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., the Director of the Zoological Gardens, Melbourne, Victoria, from the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Stock, it is stated that the Government has proclaimed Raine Island, Hinchinbrook Island, Gould Island, Garden Island, Agnes Islet, Eva Islet, Channel Rock, and the Barnard Group as reserves for the protection of native birds. The lighthouse-keeper at North Barnard Island has been appointed the ranger for the Barnard Group, and at present the authorities are in communication with two selectors on Hinchinbrook Island in connection with their appointment as rangers of that place. The assistance of the Police Department is also being sought to prevent any breach of the Acts on the islands for which no ranger can be appointed. The R.A.O.U. is extremely gratified at the action taken by the Queensland Government.

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**Bird Protection.**—As an illustration of the fact that an ardent oologist may also be a bird-lover, the following birds have reared, or are rearing, young during the present season within a radius of 50 yards of my office where I write this:—*Geopelia placida*, *Psephotus hæmatonotus*,\* *Halcyon sanctus*,\* *Cuculus inornatus*, *Chalcococcyx plagosus*, *Hirundo neoxena*,\* *Petrochelidon ariel*,\* *Micræca fascians*, *Rhipidura tricolor*, *Seisura inquieta*, *Lalage tricolor*, *Coracina robusta*, *Acanthiza chrysorrhoa*, *Malurus cyaneochlamys*, *Artamus sordidus*, *Artamus superciliosus*, *Colluricincla harmonica*, *Pachycephala rufiventris*, *Pardalotus punctatus*,\* *Aphelocephala leucopsis*,\* *Ptilotis penicillata*, *Ptilotis chrysops*, *Zosterops cærulescens*, *Grallina picata*, *Tropidorhynchus corniculatus*, *Stagonopleura guttata*.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees, Scone (N.S.W.), 28th October, 1914.

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**Starlings Useful.**—An interesting statement regarding the value of Starlings has been made by Mr. H. B. Slaney. He states:—"I am convinced that the Starling is a most valuable bird to agriculturists in southern Victoria. Certainly, my experience is not very great, but I know of no birds south of the Divide, equal as far as numbers are concerned, which visit our farms and pasture lands and consume such vast quantities of caterpillars and insects as the Starlings. I saw none of these birds leave for their nests with less than three caterpillars in its beak. One morning I observed several making for the nests with their beaks so full that they had to settle on the ground, and, after emptying their beaks, swallow some of the food before they could make a fresh start. I know that they are troublesome to fruit-growers who leave their trees unprotected, but to agriculturists and pastoralists their value is inestimable."

\* Breeding in artificial nesting-places.

**The Crimson Parrot** (*Platycercus elegans*). — A letter signed "Tavistock," in the last *Ibis* (October, 1914), records a successful attempt to induce a pair of Crimson Parrots (*Platycercus elegans*) to breed in captivity in Great Britain. The writer was surprised to find that the young birds have, with the exception of a few greenish feathers on the wing, "the full crimson plumage of the adult." The writer considered this a "most interesting and remarkable" circumstance. The editors of *The Emu* were just about to record a similar occurrence in a note on a photograph forwarded by Mr. Randall Smith, head teacher of State School, Wodonga West. The photograph showed a young Crimson Parrot, one of a clutch of three young wild birds taken last year from a nest in a hollow in a eucalypt. Each was, with the exception of a few green feathers on the wing, in the full crimson and blue plumage of the adult.

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**Birds and Drought in the West.**—I had an interesting trip the other day getting military horses. Thirty miles west of Moora we motored through a flock of 300 Black Cockatoos (*Calyptorhynchus baudini*), which flew along in front of the car for nearly a mile. I also saw on that trip some hundreds of Bare-eyed Cockatoos (*Cacatua gymnopsis*). They were using their long bills to dig up yams in a field. This year, which is a very dry one, has driven the Princess Alexandra Parrakeets (*Polytelis alexandrae*) down as far as Three Springs, where several young were observed last season. The spread of settlement in the drought areas in Western Australia will make a great difference to bird life. Bustards are increasing wonderfully, and also Quail of different species, while the lack of cover has driven many other birds back. We are having a dreadful drought this year—in fact, it is the worst year since settlement took place.—E. A. LE SOUËF, Director Perth Zoological Gardens. Perth, 22/9/14.

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**Destruction of Herons.**—Strong representations regarding the wearing of plumes of Egrets and other birds were made in Sydney to the Inter-State Commission by the Council of the Wild Life Preservation Society of Australia. It was pointed out that the present proclamation had failed in its object. The Council suggested that the present proclamation be cancelled and a fresh one issued, prohibiting the importation of all plumage other than that suggested by the Council. Among other evidence of local destruction of Herons, it was stated that during the past winter numbers of women were to be seen wearing the sections of the backs of Egrets, undressed in any way, the hat being frequently covered with these sections. One of the vice-presidents of the society, Mr. D. G. Stead, Chief Inspector of the Fisheries Department, who is now travelling abroad for his department, intends collecting information in America as to the working of the prohibition measures in force there. Measures have also been taken



Nest and Eggs of Painted Honey-eater.

FROM A PHOTO, BY THOS. P. AUSTIN.



by the Council of the Royal Zoological and Acclimatization Society of Victoria as to that State, and the Government has promised to bring in a bill dealing with the matter and making it illegal to have in possession the plumes of Egrets and other birds. The Council is of opinion that only such legislation will prevent the wearing in hats of the feathers of our useful birds. Other scientific societies in the different States have been written to, and they will probably endeavour to get their Governments to pass a similar bill.

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**Painted Honey-eaters.**—While riding through one of the paddocks of the Cobborah estate, on 24th September, 1914, I saw a pair of Painted Honey-eaters (*Entomophila picta*) fly into a pine-tree, and then into two other pine-trees. In the third tree was their nest, on to which both birds went for a few seconds, one after the other; then both flew away. The nest appeared to be practically completed, so I visited the tree again on the 27th. For a few minutes I could see neither nest nor bird, and was just starting to ride away when the male appeared, and went to the nest for about one second, then flew off. I sat down about 10 yards from the tree, in a position where I had as good a view of the nest as I could possibly get. After watching it for a few minutes I thought that something moved on it, and upon closer inspection there seemed to be a bird sitting in the nest. I started to climb the tree, and when I was within about 10 feet of the nest the female bird hopped off, but did not fly away. She came a little closer, had a good look at me, and went back on to the nest. Then the male appeared and fed her (that, evidently, is what he was doing when I saw him go to the nest at first). The nest was at the extreme end of a thin branch, about 30 feet from the ground, so I had to scoop the eggs. While I was doing this the two birds were hopping about, sometimes in the nesting-tree, but mostly in a dead box-tree a few feet away. Both birds uttered a peculiar, plaintive kind of a whistle the whole time. I cut off the branch containing the nest. I shot both birds, and when skinning them found the stomachs full of mistletoe berries.—THOS. P. AUSTIN. Cobborah Estate, Cobbora (N.S.W.), 4/10/14.

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**Extension of Localities.**—During my recent visit to Northern Queensland, Mr. Isaac Henry informed me that he had on more than one occasion observed an Emu-Wren (*Stipiturus*) on the Bellenden Plains (Cardwell district). *S. malachurus* has not been previously recorded for Northern Queensland, but whether it be the same as the southern form or not remains to be proved.

Mr. E. M. Cornwall, R.A.O.U., presented me with a skin of a male Regent-Bird (*Sericulus chrysocephalus*), taken above the line of Capricorn, in the mountain range behind Mackay. The furthest north recorded for this species is the Mackenzie River

(Rockhampton district).\* Mr. Cornwall states that Regent-Birds are fairly numerous in the locality first mentioned. In comparing the specimen with birds from New South Wales, it will be observed that the former has the dark plumage blacker and the yellow parts slightly more intense in colour, which naturally would be the case of the same species of a southern bird found within the tropics.

Red-browed Finches (*Ægitha temporalis*) are numerous in the Mackay, Townsville, and Cardwell districts. I also had evidence of the Satin Bower-Bird (*Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus*) in the last-mentioned locality. The late Mr. Kendall Broadbent recorded having collected both the Red-browed Finch and the Satin Bower-Bird in the Cardwell district.† Therefore, perhaps, they should not have been omitted for "N. Queensland" on the "Check-list," notwithstanding that the smaller forms, *Ægitha minor* and *Ptilonorhynchus minor*, respectively occur within the same region, but further north.—A. J. CAMPBELL. Melbourne, 20/12/14.

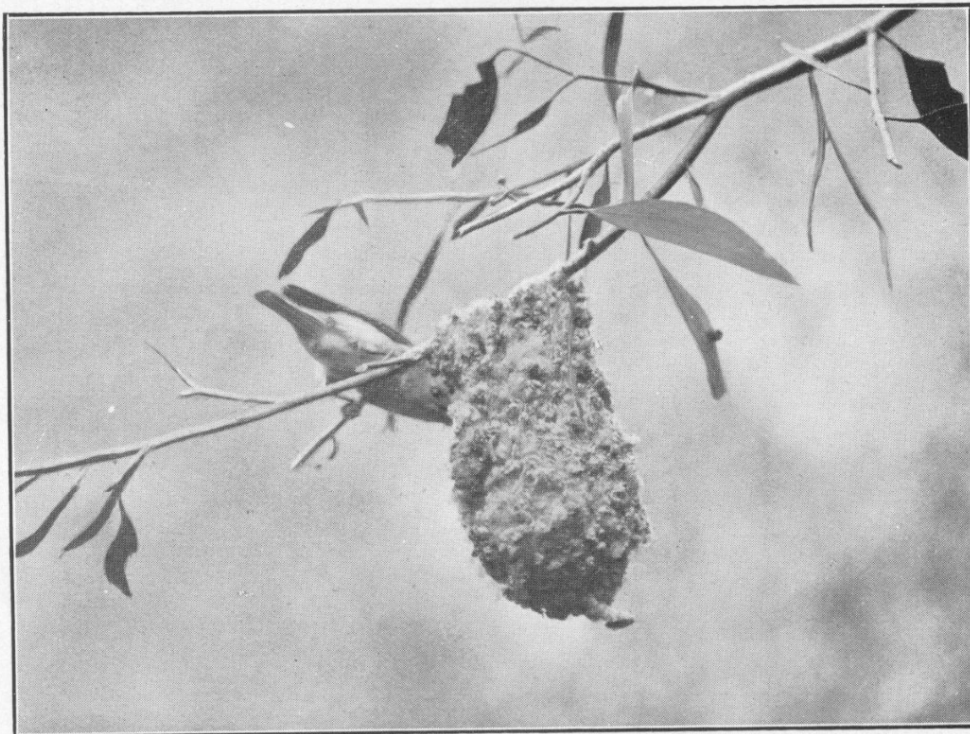
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**Notes on the Nankeen Night-Heron** (*Nycticorax caledonicus*).—Until quite lately I regarded the Nankeen Night-Heron as being shy, comparatively rare, and strictly nocturnal in habit. These views were all upset last week. On the 9th December, accompanied by a well-known Sydney solicitor, I travelled by train along the Northern railway line. When passing a swamp on Baroona Estate, near Singleton, I observed large numbers of White-necked Herons (*Notophoxyx pacifica*) and Straw-necked Ibises (*Carphibis spinicollis*) feeding in the shallow water, and drew my friend's attention to the birds. He remarked—"Oh, that is nothing; wait until you see the queer-looking brown birds further down the line." After passing Maitland we ran through more swamps, and there the fun commenced. There were Night-Herons, thousands of them, nearly all busy feeding at 3 p.m. Some were flushed by the train from within the railway fences; these often settled on the fence, and calmly watched us pass. Hundreds were within as many yards of us, while as far as one could see over the swamps the birds appeared to be equally as numerous, and all were busy feeding among the low swamp-grass.

As far as I could judge, all the birds were in fully adult plumage. I have travelled the line for very many years, and never previously noted even a single Night-Heron; why they are now congregated in such vast numbers is a mystery. The season along the coast has been good all through, and swamps everywhere are full. Why, then, should the Herons crowd on to certain areas traversed by one of the busiest railway lines in Australia? The track in question carries four sets of rails, and provides an outlet for the great coalfields of the Maitland district, the pastoral and

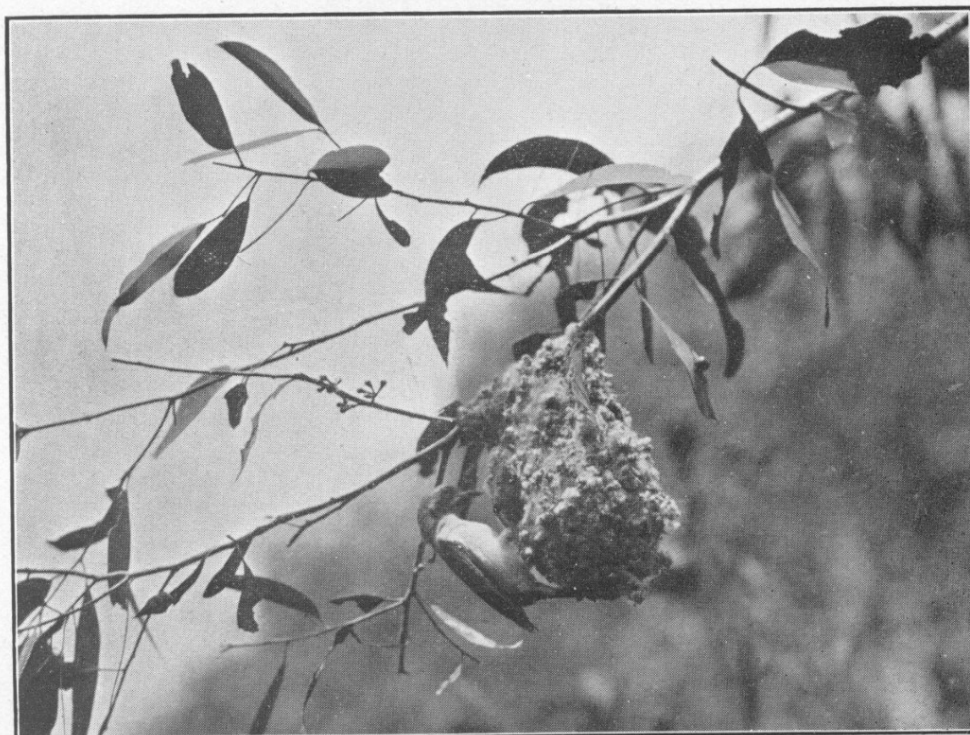
\* North, "Nests and Eggs of Birds," vol. i., p. 61.

† *Emu*, vol. x., pp. 237 and 238.



Mistletoe-Bird, ♀, Feeding Young in Nest.

FROM A PHOTO. BY CHAS. BARRETT.



Mistletoe-Bird, ♀, at Nest (a typical attitude).

FROM A PHOTO. BY CHAS. BARRETT.



agricultural produce of northern New South Wales, and the passenger traffic of the whole of the North. In "Nests and Eggs of Birds Found Breeding in Australia and Tasmania" \* appears a very interesting note by Mr. T. P. Austin, of Cobborah. He describes a visit to the breeding-place of the Night-Heron in Port Stephens. In a direct line Maitland and Port Stephens are not more than 30 miles apart, so that it is possible that the birds I saw form part of the Heronry in question.—H. L. WHITE. Belltrees, Scone, N.S.W., 13/12/14.

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**Birds and the Camera.**—In the course of the present (1914) nesting season in Victoria, I was fortunate in securing a series of photographs of the Mistletoe-Bird (*Dicaeum hirundinaceum*) and the Buff-tailed Tit-Warbler (*Acanthiza reguloides*). Early in October Messrs. S. Lawrence and R. T. Littlejohns informed me that they had located the nest of a pair of Mistletoe-Birds, suspended in a eucalypt sapling growing on a hill slope at Ferntree Gully, Dandenong Ranges. In company we visited the spot on a warm, sunny day, and spent several hours there, observing the birds and taking photographs. The nest, which contained two young birds about four days old, was less than 10 feet from the ground. Some old fence-rails were used to form a rough platform, and a camera was fixed close to the nest. After focussing and making everything ready for an exposure, I retired, and at the end of 30 feet of rubber tubing awaited the return of the birds, which had been moving about restlessly among the foliage of trees adjacent to the sapling. Nearly 20 minutes passed before one of the birds ventured to approach the nest. It was the female. She flew to the sapling, above the nest, peered at the camera, which evidently was regarded with some fear, and showed signs of indecision. But soon mother-love vanquished fear, and the dainty bird flew to the nest. Clinging to the outer wall, with her tail braced against it, she thrust her head inside, and began to cleanse the nursery. The camera shutter clicked, and away flew the bird to a tree some dozen yards distant. Within ten minutes she was back again, and this time brought food. Her actions, too, were less fearful, though she flew when another plate was exposed. In the course of an hour the female made many visits to the nest. Once the male alighted in the sapling, carrying food in his bill, but declined to come to the nest. A week later my companions, who were also successful with their camera on the first occasion, spent an afternoon on the hill slope, and secured photographs of the male bird, and of the female feeding the young, which were out in the world. The mother bird even alighted on an outstretched hand, on which a fledgeling was perched.

It was while spending a brief holiday at "The Bungalow," Paradise, near Gembrook, in November, that I found the nest

\* "Nests and Eggs," North, vol. iv., pp. 35, 36.

of a pair of Buff-tailed Tit-Warblers, placed among the clay-clogged roots of a fallen gum-tree. I was in search of Pardalotes' nesting-tunnels, and at first overlooked the Tits' nest, which was cosily built in a tiny cave—a framework of roots, from between which the earth had been delved or else had crumbled away. The female bird flew from the nest as I climbed a stairway of roots to examine it. The camera was erected on the ground, the lens being about 8 feet from the nest. The bird returned within 10 minutes to feed three nestlings, which were, I judged, just ready to fly. Two photographs of the bird at the nest were secured; then I was summoned to the house, which was not far away. When I inspected the bird-home again, after a brief absence, it was empty. The parent birds had taken the brood away, a day, perhaps, before the appointed time, as a result of my intrusion on domestic privacy. However, a search of the neighbourhood was rewarded by the discovery of two of the young Tits, which were captured, and ranged on a slender branch close to the ground. They fluttered off the perch repeatedly, encouraged by the notes—alternately angry and solicitous—of their parents, which darted around me or flew over the bough. They were joined by three other birds of the same species, and there was a great commotion. A pair of White-shafted Fantails (*Rhipidura albiscapa*) also displayed some interest in the proceedings, and probably had a nest near by.

At length one of the fledgelings remained still on the branch, and cried for food, which its parents did not deny. Though the camera was standing within a few feet of the perch, one after the other the old birds ministered to the needs of their hungry offspring. Green caterpillars and small moths and other insects were included in the menu. As the baby bird was beginning to feel the sun-glare, I placed it in a shady spot, beneath the tree to which the other fledgeling had flown, and presently saw it lured away by its parents.—CHARLES BARRETT. Melbourne, 5/12/14.

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### From Magazines, &c.

"Austral Avian Record."—The *Austral Avian Record*, vol. ii., No. 5, 24th September, 1914, shows that that prolific worker, Mr. G. M. Mathews, still maintains his large output, and is studying original sources with avidity and good results. All admit and admire the fine work he is doing, and look forward to the day when he will satisfy himself that his work on Australian birds cannot be further improved.

Mr. Mathews has now succeeded in fixing the place of origin of several species "ascribed to Australia." He says, "Pucheran has noted that some of these are Timor birds, and, therefore, can be eliminated" from Appendix B. of the 1913 "List."

An article entitled "Additions and Corrections to my List of the Birds of Australia," by G. M. Mathews, makes, independent of



Buff-tailed Tit-Warbler at Nest.

FROM A PHOTO. BY CHAS. BARRETT.



Buff-tailed Tit-Warbler Feeding Young.

FROM A PHOTO. BY CHAS. BARRETT.