

side, so that it fell over the eggs and hid them from sight when the mother was from home. The presence of this water-weed at some distance from a dyke caused me to stoop and examine it closely, and thus I discovered the eggs. Whether this was a wilful attempt to deceive on the part of the bird may be open to question. . . . Eggs deposited in nests on or in the ground, or among pebbles or ground litter, are usually mimetic in colouring and extremely difficult to distinguish from their surroundings; but, unhappily, they are more liable than those built higher up to destruction by stoats and other ground-frequenting vermin.

"It is extraordinary how men who become obsessed with a theory will try to strain every known fact into its service. The fact that the egg of our common Cuckoo not infrequently resembles the eggs of its foster-mother is assumed to be with the object of deceiving her; but when we know that by far the greater number of Cuckoos' eggs in no wise resemble the eggs among which they are deposited, this notion at once disproves itself. Nobody really knows why some Cuckoos' eggs are such admirable copies of those with which they are placed, but it has been suggested that if a Cuckoo is reared by a Hedge-Sparrow or any other bird, she will probably lay in the nest of that bird, and that similar feeding for many successive generations may affect the colouring of the eggs. I don't know, and that is about as far as most of us will ever get in explaining many of Nature's secrets; and if the truth is ever revealed, we shall discover that many of the explanations suggested are miles away from it."

## Correspondence.

### DISTRIBUTION OF AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

*To the Editors of "The Emu."*

SIRS,—My attention has been directed to Mr. Frank E. Howe's letter \* about the lack of knowledge regarding the geographical distribution of our species. Mr. Howe furnishes for "corrections and omissions" a list of 27 species, or, rather, mostly sub-species. If Mr. Howe refers to their names or equivalent names in the "Official Check-list of the R.A.O.U." I think he will find that all the localities (States, at least) that he has mentioned are recorded, save in one doubtful instance.

Regarding the Friar-Bird (*Tropidorhynchus corniculatus*) being found at Ferntree Gully (Vic.), Mr. A. J. Campbell † records that he took a nest with eggs in that locality in 1870. May I ask where is the reference for *Tyto longimembris walleri*? The use of bald, Cerberus-headed, previously-unheard-of names may prove a serious drawback in Australian ornithology.—Yours, &c.,

Melbourne, 20th November, 1915.

A. G. CAMPBELL.

\* *Emu*, vol. xv., p. 71.

† "Nests and Eggs," p. 433.