

fascination in the hoot of an Owl, and, while the European Nightingale is famous, I have just as much enjoyed the small voice of an Australian Willie Wagtail at midnight.

Some nights are full of sound (perhaps a condition in the air causes it) when foxes bark and possums are noisy, whatever the reason. On one such night, as I was walking, a Magpie woke and gave a full cadenza of melody, whereat a chorus of others nearby answered magnificently, and the still air was ringing with sound, and that was all: it seemed as if the whole colony had contentedly cuddled themselves to sleep again for the rest of the night. I particularly admire the Magpie, and like to watch his returning home to roost. I know a place where I can stand at dusk and look southwards, knowing that soon at a great dizzy height these birds will be seen approaching, till at a certain spot their wings will be fixed, half closed, and they will swoop to the tree tops at a speed which is over 100 miles an hour, as if they loved it, and there, at the last second, check themselves with a rustling whirr of pinions, lightly to settle on some pine-tree. What a perfect finish to a sunny day! Those who have swooped in the same way in an aeroplane can, by a slight, imperfect imitation, imagine the feeling.

Since I began writing this paper, I went out into the bush to see how many different sorts of birds I could notice on one afternoon. Between 2.15 and 5.15 p.m., I had found 41 all told, of which one, the Orange-winged Nuthatch (*Necositta*), was new to me. This is a more fruitful walk (aided by a car) than I think any non-tropical country in the world could rival. To name a few only, there was the Crested Bell Bird (two only), Yellow-breasted Whistler, Friar-Bird, Spotted-sided Finch, White-browed Babbler, Allied Harrier, Yellow-tufted Honey-eater, and so on; and, on the afternoon just previous, I was in a swampy part and saw eleven birds there, all of which could have been added to the list of 41 had I so willed on the same day. Where else, I repeat, in a temperate climate, could a bird-lover rejoice so fully as by seeing 52 species so quickly? But this was done in virgin bush, uncultivated, where the imported usurpers have not yet arrived to starve the rightful owners.

White Tips to Tail Feathers.—For many years past, my attention has been attracted to the great numbers of different species of birds that possess white tips to their tail feathers, and ranging from the smallest to the largest birds. The percentage of these forms among our Australian and Tasmanian species is very great, as well as with exotic kinds. This is only one of nature's many wonders, and it would indeed be very interesting if we were able to ascertain for what purpose the white tip is there.—SID. WM. JACKSON, R.A.O.U., Belltrees, N.S.W.