

Whether sipping at the drinking-bath, or preening their feathers close by, or feeding in loquats or the juicy *Erythrina* flowers, maybe hanging therefrom head downwards like Lorikeets, or honey-seeking among apple-blossoms, they were always in each other's company, and when together at the nest they would engage in loving conversational chucklings.

The young birds went on growing rapidly after leaving the nest, and soon became as large and as smoothly feathered as the old birds. They remained with the parent birds for a week or two, spending much time among the ripe loquats and the *Callistemon* and other blossoms, and became hard to identify unless the old birds could be seen feeding them.

A word or two as to the name. The Red Wattle-Bird (*Anthochaera carunculata*) a larger bird, is similar in many respects, particularly in plumage. It has conspicuous red wattles. The Little Wattle-Bird has no wattles. The proposed genus *Anellobia* (Cabanis, 1851) for the "no-wattle" bird—the name means having no wattle—expressed this. Surely a bird called a Wattle-Bird should possess wattles! Is it right to apply the name Wattle-Bird to one that has no wattles, even though it resembles another bird that does possess them? It has been called the Mock Wattle-Bird, and there is something to be said in favour of this name, if it means that the word "wattle" is incorrectly applied.

Family Life of Black-breasted Quail.

By C. H. H. JERRARD, R.A.O.U., Gayndah, Queensland.

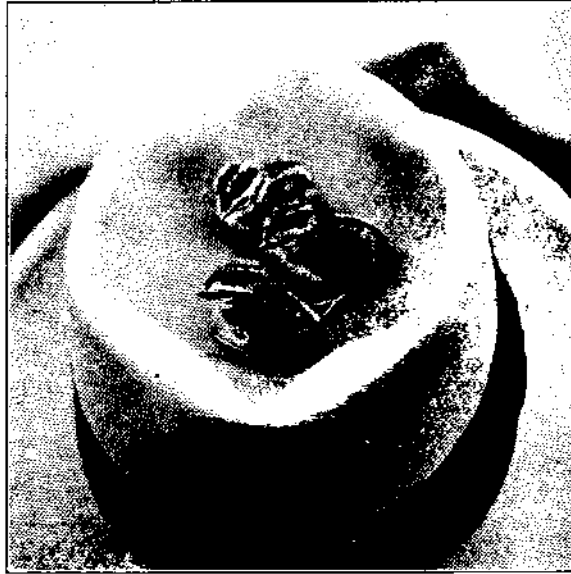
THE accompanying photograph of a very young brood of Black-breasted Quail (*Turnix melanogaster*) was obtained by me last November, and at the same time I gained some interesting knowledge of the parental habits of the male of this rare and secluded species.

I discovered Black-breasted Quail in July, 1924, in "scrub" (jungle) near my home, and observed several of them about the same spot many times afterwards; but I saw no signs of their breeding till I made the lucky find represented in the photo. The manner in which the tiny jungle-babies were secured for a picture is, I think, worth describing to readers of *The Emu*.

On 8th November I was exploring the scrub, with Black-breasted Quail as my chief objective, when I suddenly noticed one of these birds run quietly from a spot just ahead of me. It was the same spot, fifty yards or so in from the edge of the scrub, where I first saw the birds in 1924. As this one moved away and I followed for a few steps, I noticed that it was not seeking cover, and thereby quickly eluding me as usual, but kept itself well in view as if inviting pursuit. This unwonted boldness suggested that the well-known ruse of ground dwelling birds when an enemy approaches their nest or helpless young was being employed, and I looked for a nest at the spot the bird had left.

Though I found none, I could see that my search was causing anxiety to the bird. It wandered restlessly round, allowing me to

see it plainly and distinguish it as a male by its mottled breast and white throat. I stood quite still, and it was evident that this was just what I was required not to do. Determined to attract notice, that I might be enticed to leave my station and pursue him, this usually shy and timid bird advanced to within five or six yards of me, emphasizing his presence by such actions as scratching the ground, crouching and



BABY BLACK-BREASTED QUAIL.

Photo by C. H. H. Jerrard.

rising again, and uttering low, clucking sounds expressive of anger or impatience. Again and again he repeated these manoeuvres, clever enough, no doubt, when used against his ordinary enemies, but worse than useless when opposed to human reason. I waited—and watched. I think half an hour at least elapsed before my patience was rewarded. Then a movement, as of a small brown leaf on the ground, caught my eye. I looked at the leaf, and it resolved itself into a wee, striped downy thing—a baby Quail. When I picked it up it cheeped but did not struggle. While I examined it, its parent showed greater concern than ever. At a distance of less than three yards from me, he performed the actions which I have already described, pleading eloquently for the lives of his offspring by his courageous disregard for his own.

My second and third captures, representing, with the first, probably the full brood, were effected in the same way. The well-camouflaged little creatures, perfectly invisible when still, at length revealed themselves by movement. I had been within a few feet of them all the time. They made no attempt to escape, and when in my hands were very quiet; but when I placed them in my hat on the ground they chirped vigorously and tried to jump out.

After some consideration, I decided that, although my captures

were evidently very young, it might be possible to rear them in captivity, and that it was worth while to make this attempt, so that, if successful, I might present my specimens later to some zoo or aviary. Accordingly, but not without some compunction, I left the parent-bird in his distress and carried the young ones home in my pocket. I placed them in a box, with some soaked bread crumbs round them; but they would not touch the food and appeared very discontented in their prison.

Next morning they looked more than half dead. Lacking the warmth of their parent's body, they were benumbed with cold, though it was a mild November night and their box was indoors. When placed in the warm sunshine they recovered sufficiently to pose for the photograph, but I gave up the thought of rearing them, and decided to restore them to their natural guardian. So, after fixing one of Mr. Cohn's rings loosely on a leg of each, I carried all three back to the scrub and placed them exactly on the spot where I had found them.

The vivacity they immediately displayed surprised me. A moment before they had been semi-torpid; now they became brisk and animated. They set up a vigorous and penetrating chirp in chorus, ran about together, and even scratched and pecked for food. They did not, however, leave the place where their parent had left them the day before. I did not see him when I restored the young ones, but if he were about the spot he must soon have been attracted by their calls.

I hope he recovered his babies before they fell victims to some other foe from whom a second deliverance was not to be expected. Perhaps having found them, he was wise enough to lead them away from so unsafe a spot, for I have not seen parent or young since.

Nesting of the White-naped Honeyeater.

BY (REV.) CLARENCE L. LANG, R.A.O.U., Doncaster, Victoria.

"BLACK-CAP," the dainty little White-naped Honeyeater (*Melithreptus lunatus*) is found at most of the creek-sides of southern Australia, where its pleasing note of "Joe-Joe-Joe," or the harsh note, "Churr-churr," may often be heard. Although fairly common, the species is not always easily observed, as it seems to like to feed in the upper foliage of the taller trees or in dense scrub. The sexes are alike in plumage—crown and sides of the head jet-black, a narrow white band on nape, wings and upper-parts yellowish-olive, and under-parts white. There is a bare space of beautiful orange-scarlet near the eye.

I had often observed these birds in the Doncaster district, about 12 miles east of Melbourne, but it was not until November, 1926, that I located a nest. In scrub bordering the Deep Creek at Doncaster East I found these birds in large numbers, and on 22nd November I located a nest about 40 ft. from the ground in a stringy-bark tree. The parent birds were busily engaged in feeding young. I visited this locality a fortnight later and the Black-caps' young proved to be a Pallid Cuckoo. The youngster kept up a continual