

are dirty white. During breeding season the male is very conspicuous by his bright red gular pouch, which he distends upon the throat. Of course it is well-known that these birds live by plundering other birds, principally the Gannets, or "Boobies," of the fish they catch. But it has not been recorded of this Frigate Bird, or any other bird I am aware of, that when disturbed certain individuals will lift their egg in their claws and ascend into the air. On one occasion an incredulous visitor was scrutinizing from below a bird that had risen, when by fright or accident it released its hold of the egg, which fell and smashed upon the spectator, who was then and there convinced of this peculiar trait in the bird's character, and was only too thankful the egg was not addled. *Frigate Bird (*Atagen aquila*). Years ago this larger species used to frequent the island, but has now disappeared.

*Red-tailed Tropic Bird (*Phaeton rubricauda*) is an occasional visitor, and once a pair of eggs were taken from under the coral shelves.

I think we have exhausted our brief "Notes from Malden Island" if we mention a species of small duck, resembling Australian Teal in plumage, that periodically—November and December—touch there in small numbers. They arrive very bare and poor and evidently much exhausted after a long flight. After a short sojourn of four or six weeks, when they have regained a better condition, they decamp. Where they came from and whence they go are mysteries yet to be solved.

DESCRIPTION OF AN ORCHID, NEW FOR VICTORIA.

BY BARON FERD. VON MUELLER, K.C.M.G., M. & PH.D.,
F.R.S. &c.

PRASOPHYLLUM FRENCHII.

Tuber almost spherical; leaf from the upper part of the stem thinly cylindrical, attenuated upwards and slightly channelled, almost equalling in height the inflorescence or variously of less length, occasionally the new leaf already developed from the base of the stem at the time of flowering and then compressed; pedicels very short; bracts semi-ovate or deltoid-orbicular, thus about as broad as long, reaching but slightly beyond the base of the calyx; upper (through resupination lower) calyx-lobe rhomboid, or lanceolar-ovate, lower (through resupination upper) two disconnected, all dark-purplish, but at and towards the margin greenish; paired petals elliptic-lanceolar, somewhat or hardly

* Australian birds.

shorter than the calyx-lobes, of the same colour; labellar petal rather longer than the two other, slightly raised on a broad interstice, its main portion cuneate-orbicular, much incurved, but at the upper end again bent outward, greenish and upwards purplish or whitish, provided at the commencement of the terminal portion with a conspicuous usually dark-green almost semicircular somewhat decurrent callosity, downward membranously margined; terminal part of labellar petal much shorter than the other, almost deltoid, membranous, simply spreading, only slightly crisped, purplish or pale; appendices as long as the gynostemium, connected with it only at the base, obliquely narrow-elliptical; anther minutely pointed, red, turning black; pollinia two, clavate, sulphur-yellow, their corpuscles in two rows; fruit obliquely clavate-ovate, nearly thrice longer than broad.

Between the Yarra and the Dandenong Ranges; G. French.

Attains a height of $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

In stature and aspect this well-marked species is much like the larger state of *P. fuscum*, with which it also agrees in size of flowers; the approach to *P. elatum* is much less. The species is named after the youthful collector, who has filially inherited from one of the principal founders of the Field-Naturalists' Club his ardour for forming, by searches of his own, zoologic and phytologic collections, and instituting observations thereon.

The species might be mistaken for *P. brevilabre*; but an authentic specimen, received from Mr. F. Abbott, the Director of the Botanical Gardens of Hobart, with which Mr. W. Archer's drawing in the "Flora Tasmanica" well accords, proves that plant to differ in the unpaired calyx-lobe being narrower, the labellum less curved inward in its lower portion, nearly as long as the other (notwithstanding the specific name), more amply membranous and the elevation at the bend much less broad; moreover, the coloration of the flowers is different, although the upper calyx-lobes are also completely severed. In the "Flora Australiensis," VI., 338, Bentham has included more than one species under the name *P. brevilabre*. The writer has ventured, to reduce in the first "Systematic Census of Australian Plants," Fourth Supplement, page 4, and in the "Second Census," page 190, the genus *Corunastylis* to *Prasophyllum*, although he had no specimens, on which observations could be instituted of his own. If the structure, delineated by Mr. Fitzgerald ("Australian Orchids," II., part 3) with accustomed splendour and fidelity, is not of aberrant but of normal growth, the genus-characteristics would rest on the increased number of tubers, on the terminally much appendiculated anther with much incurved connective-membrane, on the resemblance of the paired petals to staminodes, the latter seemingly being absent, unless they replace undeveloped petals, and on the remarkable elongation of the style; this structure indeed

is very curious, and from this, not from statural resemblance, the specific name *apostasioides* was derived. I regard *Apostasiaceæ* as a distinct order, intermediate between *Orchideæ* and *Burmanniaceæ*.

ZOOLOGICAL NOTES ON A TRIP TO WALHALLA.

BY ARTHUR DENDY, M.Sc., F.L.S.

(*Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria,*
11th November, 1889.)

It is hardly necessary to say that the present paper does not pretend to be in any way an exhaustive account of the fauna of Walhalla. All that I aim at is to record a few very simple observations upon some of the lower forms of life met with in that locality during a visit of little more than a week.

Walhalla, as most of my audience are doubtless aware, at any rate after listening to Mr. Tisdall's paper at the last meeting of the Club, is a small gold-mining township in North Gippsland, rather more than 100 miles from Melbourne, and situated on a small creek which flows into the Thomson River a few miles below the township. Hemmed in on all sides by lofty and precipitous hills, the township lies in a very narrow valley, and a few years ago, before the existing coach road was made, was very difficult of access. The surrounding mountains, composed of silurian shales and sandstones, in which lie the gold-bearing quartz reefs, are heavily timbered with gum-trees. Within a radius of a mile or two from the centre of the township the hillsides have been cleared of all the larger timber, and in its place a dense growth of scrub has appeared. The wood-cutting is carried on principally by Italians, and an almost incredible quantity is annually consumed at the Long Tunnel and other gold mines. Tramways have been cut for miles along the hillsides in almost every direction for bringing the wood in to the mines. These tramways, with their accompanying steep "shutes," down which the wood is literally poured into the township below, form a conspicuous feature in the landscape, and being almost the only level ground available, form the principal walks of the neighbourhood. One great advantage about the tram lines is the impossibility of losing one's way upon them, which a stranger would be pretty sure to do if he struck into the bush for any distance.

Along the tram lines, then, many of my rambles were taken, and many of my specimens captured. Wherever I went, whether along the tramways or through the scrub, I might have been followed by the track of overturned stones and logs, for my attention was principally directed to the inhabitants of the dark



Mueller, Ferdinand von. 1889. "Description of an Orchid, New for Victoria [Prasophyllum frenchii]." *The Victorian Naturalist* 6, 126–128.

View This Item Online: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/95004>

Permalink: <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/172017>

Holding Institution

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Sponsored by

Harvard University, Museum of Comparative Zoology, Ernst Mayr Library

Copyright & Reuse

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.