No. I.

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A

Monograph of the Psittacidae,

OR

PARROT FAMILY OF AUSTRALIA.

BY THE

REV. J. J. HALLEY.

ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL DRAWINGS

BY

JAMES W. SAYER.

Notice to Subscribers.—It will be impossible in every case to give the plates in the order in which the birds are described in the letter-press, but they will all appear in due time. The Introduction being somewhat lengthy will be published from time to time with the parts, and separately paged.

Information as to the habits, etc., of any of the family will be thankfully received by the author and duly acknowledged.

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NATURAL MUSEUM MELBOURNE

INTRODUCTION.

THE natural history of new countries must always be deeply interesting, and it is easy to fancy the delight experienced by Sir Joseph Banks and Dr. Solander at the rich profusion of floral treasures, offered for their investigation, when, just a hundred years ago, they landed in a garden of new forms and called it Botany Bay.

All there was strange. Strange the evergreen eucalypti, fringing the very water's edge—strange the grass-tree, like some tall native standing with poised spear—charmingly strange all the varied and beautiful flora of that luxuriant and yet mere sandy swamp lying along the coast to the south of Sydney—strange the bounding kangaroo and the stately emu of the more open glades—strange and beautiful the red, blue, and yellow, the rainbow-colored parrakeets that incessantly called and chattered welcome above the heads of the new-comers—strange that “*rara avis in terris*” the black swan, and all the other pretty water-fowl which dotted and adorned the bays of England's new-won southern empire—strange, but neither charming nor beautiful, the veritable devil was soon found and described by one of Captain Cook's terrified seamen to be “as large as a one-gallon keg, with horns and wings, yet he crept so slowly I might have touched him if I had not been afeared,” which impersonation of the evil one turned out to be the grey-headed vampire.

From the day that Sir Joseph Banks called the new-found country Botany Bay—from the variety and profusion of its vegetable productions—the flora and fauna of Australia have been examined and studied with ever-increasing interest, and chiefs in the various departments of natural science have mapped out and described her families, genera, and species. In very truth, the natural productions of this great island-continent—differing in many respects as the fauna of Australia does from that of any other region—are worthy of investigation, especially by those who call this sunny land their home, and are proud to be the founders of another Britain in southern seas.

Here, in her great wastes and deserts, the Carnivora one might expect to find in such wild solitudes, are represented only by the dingo or native dog; while on the other hand her plains, her woods, her rocky gullies, her mountain heights abound with the various families of the Marsupialia. Here may be found marsupials, from the great kangaroo, an old man of which will be some six feet high and of proportionate strength and sinew, down to the diminutive little kangaroo-rat of the size of a rabbit, and to that most exquisite Tom Thumb of a marsupial, the kangaroo-mouse, but three inches long. The various eucalypti abound with opossums, while the fat lazy koalas, and the no less lazy wombats, feed on the undergrowth.

A land of vastness, with wide-spreading plains, and towering trees, and long rivers—a land of contradictions, where these same long rivers are sometimes of great breadth and depth, and run rapidly, and are at other times mere chains of ponds; where some of them, after running some hundreds of miles, and exhibiting in places fine reaches of great depth, fringed with trees, and abounding with fish and fowl, will lose themselves entirely in a desert plain,—long rivers which, in all their course, have hardly a water-fall worthy of the name.

A land, having a wide tract of country, which one explorer designates as the most awful and

terrible place to be found on earth—waterless and barren, and with food neither for man nor beast—uninhabitable for ever, and with much difficulty, and with great privation and suffering, brings home his scurvy-stricken followers. Another finds it a garden, with running streams and green grass, and his narrative reads like a series of pleasant picnics. While yet a third has to tell of floods, and wide plains turned into inland seas, and bare escapes from death by drowning where the first with fevered skin sought in vain for water to quench his burning thirst.

A land, where, wonderful to tell, the so-called honeysuckle is a *Banksia*, the cherry *Exocarpus*, the apple *Angophora*; where crows are shrikes, parrots are honey-suckers, and a turkey has been classed as a vulture.

A land, said to be without song birds, but on the contrary a country where one of her crow-shrikes sings with such an organ-like fulness, variety, and power, that Sir Bulwer Lytton* tells us that to such carollings the nightingale herself must give up the prize.

A land, unexcelled in the gorgeousness of plumage displayed, in the graceful forms, and strange habits, of her avifauna. The various species of the unrivalled parrot family, the magnificent regent bird, the rifle bird, the tricolored ephthinura, and the wondrously beautiful blue and red warblers, illustrate the first; the tail of the lyre-bird, the elegant little doves, and the charming fly-catchers, prove the second; while where, the wide world over, could stranger habits be found than those of the bower birds or the regent bird, who build most exquisitely beautiful groves, adorned with brilliant feathers, bright stones, and shining shells, simply as play-grounds, or rather, perhaps, courting lanes, where the males display their gorgeous golden plumage, or ruffle up their mauve collars for the delectation of their brides, or chase them up and down these fairy walks; or those of the mound-building megapode, who, but the size of a hen-pheasant, tosses up a great heap of vegetable soil, fifteen feet high and sixty feet in circumference, in which she lays her eggs, to be hatched by solar rays.

A land, complained of as utterly dull and wearying in its scenery, yet outside the bounds where all wild life has been ruthlessly exterminated by the ever-advancing bands of tillers of the soil, the intelligent quiet eye may ever find more than sufficient to interest the mind in noting the ways, the habits, the little eccentricities of bird life. While travelling those flat, seemingly interminable salt-bush plains of the Lower Murray and Murrumbidgee, treeless and hill-less, many pleasant hours have yet been spent in company with Jenny Wren, and her blue and silver-backed husband (*malurus leucopterus*), watching the dexterous way in which the salt bushes were threaded, a deftness of flight unsurpassed by any bird I have ever noticed; and then when deemed unwatched, out would ring a song of joy and gladness, not loud, but full and sweet, that gave a cheering life to the surrounding dullness. In the forests of eucalypti, what can be more animating than to note the flight of the honey-eating lorrikeets, as with a perfect furor of haste, and loud cries of angry impatience, they hurl themselves—like a squadron of cavalry on the enemy—into the leafy strongholds of the gum-trees, despoil their flowers of hidden nectar; rising again, now with loud cries of victory, on swift wing, with arrowy flight, seek new forays. Near the farms, the various families of the broad-tailed parrakeets (*platycerci*) exhibit a tameness akin to that of the impudent house sparrow of the fatherland; and not unfrequently I have noticed the rosellas (*p. eximius*) hardly fly a dozen yards along the road on which I was driving. On the quiet little grassy plains, surrounded by trees, those most exquisite of all the parrot tribe, the psephoti and euphema, delight us for many an hour as so daintily

* *Strange Story.*

they trip on the green sward, and after having feasted on the grass-seeds, seem to be of all the family the real followers of Terpsichore as they flit and dance around each other with true bird delight.

Birds have been favorites of man in all nations and in all ages. The elegance of their form, the beauty of their plumage, their domesticity, and attachment to their friends, their ethereal nature, their sweet notes, all go to make them welcome to man, who, even in his most degraded state, has still something left of his primeval esthetics, and still some love for the handiwork of an all-wise and all-loving Creator. The prince delights to adorn his palace with gorgeous macaws, or with pretty love-birds; the weaver of Spitalfields covers his dingy roof with pigeon traps; the London boy rejoices in the possession of some disreputable-looking cock-sparrow, or of a linnet that seems to have known better days. Cock-robin is hailed alike in the old land and here,—

Sweet social bird, with breast of red,
How prone's my heart to favour thee!
Thy look oblique, thy prying head,
Thy gentle affability.

Thy friendly heart, thy nature mild,
Thy meekness and docility,
Creep to the love of man and child,
And win thine own felicity.

In stately hall and rustic dome,
The gaily robed,—and homely poor,
Will watch the hour when thou shalt come,
And bid thee welcome to the door.

The herdsman on the upland hill,
The ploughman in the hamlet near,
Are prone thy little paunch to fill,
And pleased thy little psalm to hear.

The woodman seated on a log,
His meal divides atween the three,
And now himself, and now his dog,
And now he casts a crumb to thee.

The peacock's plume in pride may swell,
The parrot prate eternally,
But yet no bird man loves so well,
As thee with thy simplicity.

While we of these sunny southern lands have the representatives of this and other European birds, we still love to have about us our own specialities—our pretty cockies and our budgerrie gars, and that most amusing of birds, the magpie. Well has Alexander Wilson said, "For to me it appears that of all inferior creatures Heaven seems to have intended birds, as the most cheerful associates of man, to sooth and exhilarate him in his labors by their varied melody; to prevent the increase of those supernumerary hosts of insects which would soon consume the products of his industry."

First in rank in the class Aves should stand we think our favorite family of the parrots. Generally made but a subdivision of the Scansores, sometimes, where only five orders are allowed, but a family of a tribe of the Insessores, we would promote them to a distinct order of their own, placing them, like Mr. Blyth, in Bohn's edition of Cuvier's *Animal Kingdom*, as the first order under the name limited to themselves of Scansores; or as Dr. Brehm, giving them the quaint but expressive name of Ennucleatores (*crackers*). It is certain that they have little or nothing in common with the other

families of the Zygodactyli to which they have been allied. If we except the single fact of the outer toe being reversed, the foot itself differs materially in the small tubercle-like scales with which it is covered, from all the Insessores, not excluding the other families of the yoke-footed genera. Indeed the more we examine their affinities, their boldness, the contour of their beaks, with the margins toothed, the nostrils placed in a cere, the more we shall be inclined to ally them with the falconidæ, and, if such a term were admissible, call them "vegetarian Raptores." *

The most cursory glance shows that all the numerous genera of parrots are formed on one and the same sub-type, and this sub-type is a very clearly defined one, admitting of course an immense number of varying subordinate modifications, but in no case exhibiting any indications of passage or transition into another. The family is therefore an isolated one, and as such, and looking also at their wonderful docility and intelligence, together with the perfection of their organisation, we think at any rate that those ornithologists who separate the Pigeons from the Rasores, constituting them an order, and who consider that the Struthionidæ should have such a primary division assigned to them, ought to consider this family an ordinal one, for certainly the points of difference which separate the Columbidae from the Rasores are not so numerous or important as those that separate the parrots from the other families of scansorial birds.

But whether deemed an ordinal division, or a subdivision of the Scansores, or a family of a tribe of the Insessores, no family can offer more scope for interesting investigation. With the exception of the honey-eaters it is the most numerous of the families of Australian birds, divided into at least seventeen genera, including fifty-nine—possibly sixty-one—species. From north to south, from east to west, our plains, our woods, our river-banks, our shores, our homes, are rendered beautiful and gay by these tulips of the bird world.

This great island-continent, if we include Tasmania, lies between about the tenth and forty-fifth degrees of south latitude, and has therefore of course a great diversity of climate,—from the pleasant warm temperate clime of the southern colonies to the intense heat of the intertropical regions. The natural consequence of this is that great difference is found in our vegetable productions. In Victoria the ordinary summer fruits of England, with peaches and grapes, grow to rare perfection; in New South Wales wide orange groves perfume the air with richest fragrance, and the luscious fruit hangs in golden profusion, while the rivers of Queensland are fringed with the graceful banana, their rich alluvial banks wave with the sugar-cane, and pine-apples are grown like cabbages in fields. The natural flora of the country varies in the same way, for while trees from south to north are found partaking of the general type of eucalypti, each belt of country has its own special vegetation. The eastern coast line of New South Wales is adorned with the stately cabbage-tree palm (*corypha Australis*); the Lower Murray produces the myall (*acacia pendula*) with its profusion of rich yellow flowers and violet-scented wood, and the quondong (*fusanus acuminatus*), one of the few natural edible fruits of the land. The rich alluvial river lands of the Richmond, the Clarence, and their tributaries, grow the useful and beautiful red cedar, while Queensland has pines, towering figs, and stately palms, with all the luxuriant undergrowth of a tropical land.

In all this varying, and in some respects remarkable, flora, there is a corresponding varying avifauna, and in that avifauna the various species of Psittacidæ play their part, and in Nature's wondrous adaptability are found of one type indeed, but modified in accordance with their geographical distribution.

* J. G. Wood. *Natural History of Birds.*

NATIONAL MUSEUM MELBOURNE

Polytelis Bainesi
Barrabands F

Polytelis Melanura.
Black tailed Parakeet.

A MONOGRAPH
OF THE
PSITTACIDÆ, OR PARROT FAMILY,
OF
AUSTRALIA.

Sub-family *Macrocircinæ* (Macaws).

Genus *POLYTELIS* (*Wagler*).

Derivation of Name.—Πολυτελής (*polytelis*), excellent.

Generic Characters.—Bill thickish; upper mandible, culmen rounded, tomia distinctly toothed; under mandible, wide, short, and toothed. Wings, mean length—three first feathers the longest and nearly equal, the second and third, however, slightly longer than the first; second and third quills dilated near the middle and tapering towards the apex. Tail very long, cuneated, feathers narrow, two middle ones more slender than the others and considerably longer; tips rounded. Feet—tarsi longer than hallux. Tarsi and toes more elongated and slender; the beak, and especially the upper mandible, smaller and shorter than in the genus *Palæornis* of Mr. Vigors, in which the birds now to be described were first classed.

I have placed this genus under the sub-family of Macaws (*Macrocircinæ*), in accordance with the systems of Messrs. Selby and Swainson, rather than allying them with the Broad-tailed or Ground Parrakeets, as I find is done by Mr. Wood in his book on birds and by Mr. Gray of the British Museum. Any one who looks at them as they adorn our bush will soon see that their general appearance and their modes of life are very different from the *Platycercinæ*, though it is also apparent that in some respects they approach that family. I therefore think that they may be looked on as the connecting link between the Macaws and the broad-tailed sub-family, though belonging to the former.

BLACK-TAILED PARRAKEET.

POLYTELIS MELANURA (Gould).

Synonyms.—*Palæornis melanura* and *anthopeplus*, latter female (Vigors) ; *Barrabandius melanurus* (Bonap.) ; *Platycercus melanurus* (G. R. Gray).

Trivial Names.—Long-tailed Parrot ; Mountain Parrot ; Black-tailed Parrot ; Murray Parrot ; Rock Pebbler.

Aboriginal Names.—Wou-kun-ga ; Ju-lu-up ; Mor-ro-got.

Derivation.—*Melas* (*melas*), black, *oupa* (*oura*), tail.

Habitat.—Western Australia ; South Australia ; banks of the Lower Murray in Victoria ; Murray, Darling, and Lachlan country in New South Wales, and possibly penetrating to the southern parts of Queensland. In a line drawn from Melbourne to the Victoria River, its habitat would lie between that of *P. Barrabandi* and *P. Alexandræ*.

HOUGH very familiar with both this bird and *P. Barrabandi* (Green Leek), from its habitat I have of course had no opportunity of studying the habits of the third bird of the genus—the *P. Alexandræ* ; I am inclined, however, to think that the parrakeet now described may, from its slightly slenderer and more elongated tarsi, be taken as the typical bird of the genus to which it belongs. On the Lower Murray it is very abundant in the summer time—or at any rate was in the years 1859–60. It is a migratory bird, appearing in the valley of the Lower Murray in the spring of the year, and leaving it about May. I first noticed it on the tall gum trees about the flooded land of the Euston station. At the same time the trees growing on the edge of Lake Proah, then and generally dry, might be said to be perfectly infested with these birds and the Rose-breasted Cockatoo. They appeared not in small families of only ten or twelve, as Gilbert, quoted by Gould, remarks having found them in Western Australia, but certainly thirty or forty, or sometimes more, together ; and yet it was quite noticeable that they flew in distinct companies—one company lighting on a tall tree, rifling its seed and nectar, and then, on a sudden, almost like the Lorrikeets (*trichoglossi*), but without the horrid screeching of that family, rising and hurrying off to some other domain ; then, in a little while, another company, with swift and arrowy wing, would fall on the the prey left by the first. Not unfrequently they descend to the ground, and walking there with considerable ease, not devoid of gracefulness, pick up the fallen seeds and buds of the Eucalypti. But whether walking, flying, climbing, or caged as pets, their lengthened and most elegant tail, their well-proportioned body, neck, and wings, give them, together with the other members of the genus, a charm and grace not found in any other of the Australian Psittacidæ.

Their flight is rapid in the extreme, yet not noisy—arrowy would be the most appropriate word that could be used ; indeed, when they close their wings in entering a tree, their lengthened tails and outstretched necks may well enable the imagination to fancy them a flight of gorgeous arrows shot by some army of Dryads into a leafy stronghold. Their nests I did not find, though I was told that in that part of the Murray they build in hollows high up in tall trees, and lay six or seven eggs.

They bear confinement well enough, but ought to have a cage considerably larger than that required by the Rosellas, or any of the broad-tailed family, or else their charming tails get very dirty and dragged. I never knew any of them learn to talk, though like many other birds who never distinctly enunciate words, they will pick up a chatter altogether different from their natural notes. For food they will eat seeds of almost any sort ; but when procurable they should often be supplied with fresh gum blossoms ; and if these are not obtainable, it would be well to dip little branches in sugared or honeyed water, to supply the nectar they certainly eat, when they have to work for their own living.

Description.—Male : Head and neck yellow, with a faint tinge of green ; shoulders, rump, and under surface, brightish yellow ; back and scapularies, olive ; primaries and tail, bluish black ; greater wing-coverts, scarlet, edged with yellow and black ; irides, orange red ; bill, scarlet ; feet, grey.

Female : Instead of the bright yellow of the male, olive green ; shoulders, deep green ; primaries, secondaries, and spurious wing, deep blue-black, margined externally with greenish yellow ; some of the secondaries and greater wing-coverts, dull red ; tail, dark green, passing into black ; five lateral feathers, slightly margined on inner web and tipped with rose ; bill and feet as in male. Size, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tail, $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; wing, 8 in. ; bill, $\frac{5}{8}$ in. ; tarsi, $\frac{7}{8}$ in.

BARRABAND'S PARRAKEET.

POLYTELIS BARRABANDI (*Wagler*).

Synonyms.—*Palaeornis rosaceus* and *Barrabandi* (Vigors) ; *Barrabandius rosaceus* (Bonap.) ; *Platycercus rosaceus* (G.R.Gray).

Trivial Names.—Green Leek ; Barraband's Parrakeet ; Rose-breasted Parrot.

Aboriginal Names.—Tit-yert.

Derivation.—Barrabandi, in honor of Barraband, a celebrated ornithological artist, who executed the drawings for Le Vaillant's *Histoire Naturelle des Perroquets*.

Habitat.—New South Wales generally, but becoming rare towards Riverina, where the Black-tailed (*P. melanura*) takes its place ; scattered throughout the whole of Victoria, nowhere, however, very abundant. Very rare in Queensland, though occasionally found. Generally south and east of *Polytelis melanura*.

OW this favorite bird obtained its trivial name of Green Leek must be buried among the lost archives of Botany Bay when a convict settlement. Possibly some New South Welshman of the early colonial days wished to have the fragrant typical vegetable of old Cambria represented in the new Wales, but wisely chose the symbol in a beautiful bird, rather than—with all respect be it said—a somewhat questionable root. This bird is as beautiful in appearance, and as elegant in form, as the bird last described. The hues of its plumage, seen set off by dark leaves, on a bright summer day, are truly charming. I have never met so many together as I have of the Black-tailed Parrakeet, nor have I found them so abundant in any one locality. Neither is its flight so rapid—its wings being slightly shorter than that bird's,—but its carriage on the ground, its food, and its general habits, are, as might be expected, similar. I never found it a particularly shy bird, and when met with, it was easily procured. The red-thighed birds are old ones, but at what age they assume this additional adornment I have not been able to determine. It is quite possible too that caged specimens may, from the food provided for them, attain this distinction earlier in life than if they were wandering in the wild woods free. I have been told that at six years old a tame bird acquired this plumage, but I cannot rely on the information. When I was staying at a station between Swan Hill and Euston, a pair were hatching ; the nest, as with most of the tribe, was simply a hole in a tall gum tree with no lower branches for thirty feet. The eggs, six in number, and dirty white.

This bird is a great favorite, and very common as a caged bird. I have known them to say such words as “Joey,” but not much else, save what imagination prompted some fair and fond owner to believe the “bonnie birdie” did say. The treatment required is the same as for the Black-tailed.

Description.—Male : Sinciput throat and neck of a rich yellow ; beneath the yellow throat a collar of bright red ; back of the head, bluish-green ; upper and under parts of the body green, the part between the bill, eyes, and ear-coverts being more grass-green than the rest ; primaries, secondaries, and spurious wing, dark blue, tinged with green ; tail, green ; two intermediate feathers nearly two inches longer than the others ; under surface of wing and tail dark brown ; thighs in old birds frequently red, like the collar, otherwise green ; irides, deep yellow ; bill, bright red. Female : General plumage green, with faint indications of rose color on the chest ; central tail feathers uniform green, the inner webs of the remainder red. Size, $15\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tail, $9\frac{3}{4}$ in. ; wing, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; bill, $\frac{1}{2}$ in. ; tarsi, $\frac{3}{4}$ in.

PRINCESS OF WALES PARRAKEET.

POLYTELIS ALEXANDRÆ (Gould).

Synonyms.—*Trivial Names.*—Princess of Wales Parrakeet.*Aboriginal Names.*—*Derivation.*—Alexandræ, in honor of Alexandra, Princess of Wales.*Habitat.*—Central Australia, north-west of P. melanura.

HIS bird was discovered during Mr. Stewart's first expedition and attempt to cross the continent from south to north. The tract followed by Mr. Stewart was from Adelaide, generally tending to N.N.W. No naturalist attended the late Mr. Burke in his successful, but disastrous, journey from Cooper's Creek to Carpentaria, and back. Mr. Burke passed four hundred miles to the eastward of Central Mount Stewart. The country, as described, seems likely for such a bird as this; but the great hurry with which each day's journey was made would prevent any minute or special notice being taken of the fauna of the country passed through. I think it is therefore to be expected that its range will be found to extend along the whole of the well-watered country lying under and about the tropic of Capricorn; and, as our colonists push out and conquer for themselves and for civilization new domains and fresh pastures, this exquisitely beautiful bird will become familiar, when it is sure to be a prime favorite, not only on account of its charming beauty, but also because it bears the name of a lady well-beloved even in these distant lands.

From personal knowledge I can of course say nothing of its habits; they will, however, be in all probability similar to those birds of the same genus already described.

Description.—"Forehead, light blue; cheeks and throat, rose; head, neck, back, and scapularies, olive green; lower back and rump, blue; shoulders and wing-coverts, yellowish-green; extreme webs of primaries, dull blue; breast and abdomen, grey; thighs, red; upper tail-coverts, olive, tinged with blue; two centre tail feathers, bluish-green; the two next the same, with brown on their inner webs; the remainder, outer portion, grey; central, black; inner, deep rose; bill, red; feet, brown. Size—length, 14 in.; bill, $\frac{1}{2}$ in.; wing, 7 in.; tail, 9 in.; tarsi, $\frac{3}{8}$ in."—GOULD.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Ja^s W. Sayer del.

Hamel & Ferguson Lith 85 Que

PLYCTOLOPHUS LEADBEATERI.
Leadbeaters Cockatoo.

Sub-family Plyctolophinæ (Cockatoos).

Genus PLYCTOLOPHUS.

Generic Characters.—Head large and ornamented with a folding crest; bill short and broad, culmen greatly arched and strong, the upper mandible forming nearly the quarter of a circle, tip narrow and acute, tomia toothed, base of the under mandible frequently concealed with feathers by which it appears higher than long, feathers growing well on to the cere in which the nostrils (large and lateral) are placed; cheeks plumed; wings long, first quill rather shorter than the three following, which are nearly of a length, and dilated about the middle; tail rather short, even; feet robust; tarsi shorter than hallux and reticulated.

Derivation of Name.—Plyctolophus; πλεκτος (*plektos*), folded, λοφος (*lophos*), a crest.

The generic name given by M. Vieillot has been adopted, simply because it indicates a general character of the genus, and is therefore more significant than the meaningless name "cacatua," given by Brisson and adopted by Mr. Gould, who, however, it must be confessed, is borne out by Mr. Gray of the British Museum, and Mr. Wood.

GREAT SULPHUR-CRESTED COCKATOO.

PLYCTOLOPHUS GALERITUS (Vieill).

Synonyms.—Cacatua Galerita (Gould); Psittacus Galeritus (Latham and Kuhl); Cacatua chrysolophus (Less).

Trivial Names.—Great Sulphur-crested Cockatoo; Common White Cockatoo; Helmeted Cockatoo; Lemon-crested Cockatoo,

Aboriginal Names.—Can-ke (Lower Murray); Ty-in-nap (Wimmera); Ka-ra-way Kur-riang (East Coast); Moo-rai (Lachlan); Mar-bit (Raffle's Bay); Man-i-eh (King George's Sound).

Derivation of Name.—Galeritus, wearing a cap; hence, tufted or helmeted.

Habitat.—Generally the whole of Australia, though it was not observed by Mr. Sturt in the interior to the westward of the Barrier Ranges.

ALL Australians are well acquainted with this favorite and fine bird, it being universally distributed throughout Australia. It feeds on roots, seeds, grain, and fungi; indeed, hardly anything of a vegetable nature seems to come amiss to it. It is most destructive to the maize of the New South Wales, and to the wheat crops of the Victorian and South Australian farmers; hundreds, indeed, even thousands, being sometimes together, the damage done to a crop may be easily imagined. In spring-time, when the wheat is young, I have known them to pull up the young plants by thousands. The mere mischievous pulling up of plants seems to be a sort of rage with this bird; for after the most careful setting of bulbs, dividing and planting out of flowers, and generally making the garden tidy, Master Cocky, with the quietest and most amusing, though very annoying, *nonchalance*, has pulled all up again.

Open plains, cleared land, and lightly timbered country, seem their more favored resorts. Mighty flocks, numbering thousands—now on the ground, now rising into the trees, with their loud piercing screams, and their shining white plumage,—give life to the otherwise dreary region; so that one may speak of them, in the words of Sir Thomas Mitchell, as "sporting like spirits of light."* Wherever they

* *Expedition into Central Australia*, vol. i., p. 74.

are found they act with the caution displayed by some other birds, sentinels being always placed on the tops of surrounding trees to note the approach of danger and give out the warning cry to the bulk of the flock. The main army may encamp on one tree, but their small detachments mount guard on other trees, and form a circle of watchful sentries round the grand central encampment.

Canke, as the tribes of the Lower Murray call this bird, forms for them a favorite dish. With snake-like noiselessness, the black hunter may be seen stealthily approaching the feeding-ground or the tree where the bulk of the flock are to be found; having eluded the observation of the sentinels till within a convenient distance, he suddenly appears. The warning cry of danger is uttered to apprise the flock; but with swifter flight than theirs, the wildly-flying boomerang rushes through their midst. In vain they try to elude its eccentric movements; like a thing of sentient life, now here, now there, it strikes, till one or more lie disabled on the ground. The piercing cries of these stay the flock from seeking safety in defeated flight. Round and round their wounded comrades, uttering answering cries, they vainly fly; while ever and anon, as they come within distance, out is hurled, by well-practised arm, the unerring boomerang, till a goodly heap of slain reward the hunter's skill, and the diminished flock, with angry notes at last retire. Nor is the native alone in his appreciation of this dainty dish. Cockatoo soup is a pottage by no means to be despised, and cockatoo pie, when made of young birds, will compare favorably with the famous rook pie of the fatherland.

No birds are more playful than these, whether wild or domesticated. It would be quite impossible to attempt to describe their various tricks and antics, as they put themselves into a hundred different attitudes. I have noticed a strange habit in their flight. When circling round a tree before alighting, they will occasionally tumble over very much like a Tumbler Pigeon, only rather sideways than directly head over heels. Their motion on the ground is, to say the least of it, very awkward. The fact is that they walk, not merely on their feet and toes, but also on their short tarsi; their walk is therefore a decided waddle. They will, however, sometimes get over the ground more quickly by a series of jumps. Their harsh screams are uttered with increased vigor towards sunset. On a summer's evening, as the bright orb of day goes down in splendour, flooding earth and sky with its golden light, either as "good night" to one another, or welcome to coming night, or anger at departing day, thousands will set up their wild unearthly screeches.

Cockatoos are very easily tamed, and seem to possess some degree of affection. They delight to sit on the back of one's chair, or on the shoulder, and will climb up a lady's dress and nestle in her neck and bosom, and with their strong beaks take a gentle kiss. At the same time they may be credited as about as mischievous as birds can be. One that we once possessed, and that now sits quiet and stately on the mantelpiece, had a completely insatiable desire to split up cedar pencils, and such like, into smallest shreds, and an invincible dislike to wainscoat boards, evinced in a like way. While another determinately tears off beads whenever seen—from slippers, cushions, or dresses. They soon and easily learn to talk and repeat moderately long sentences; while the way in which they sometimes imitate the barking of dogs, the cackling of hens, and the calls of other poultry, is so exact, that it is quite impossible to distinguish the real from the simulated cry. I have also known them to be taught tricks. One now in Ballarat will, at the word of command, hold a knife like a drawn sword, take up a wine-glass in his foot, and bring to the owner, when bidden, any article thrown on the table. They seem to experience as much satisfaction at having the feathers about their heads ruffled up, and the loose skin from which the crest springs scratched, as a cat does when it is pleasantly stroked; indeed, however excited or angry a bird may be, it is easy in this way to soothe it completely. Their skin, like those of others of the family, is covered with an epidermic production of a white farinaceous-like powder, and when handling them, especially in the spring-time, one gets quite covered with the flour-like dust.

They lay their eggs—white, and two in number—in holes of trees, sometimes in hollow limbs, and as deep down as five or six feet from the opening, or in fissures of rocks; convenient cliffs being sometimes resorted to by thousands of birds in the breeding season. Mr. Sturt says they “build in vast numbers in the Murray cliffs, making them ring with their wild notes, and in that situation are out of the reach of the natives.”* Mr. Caley notes that they make what the natives call “co-tora” in adjoining trees, that is, bark stripped off the smaller branches, and cut up into small pieces; this, lying in conspicuous heaps, the locality of the nest is discovered. At Moyston, in the Ararat district, two birds, belonging to different owners, paired for several years, and had their nest in a dead tree just outside the village, where the eggs were laid; but, from some cause or other, they were not successful in their laudable endeavours to bring up a family. When the breeding season was over, they returned to their respective masters. As I write this paper, the month being September, my neighbour's cocky is violently courting one of the hens in my poultry-yard; indeed, sometimes the poor thing seems quite plagued, for she certainly does not return the advances of her would-be bridegroom, though he displays himself to the very best advantage, and has learnt her language to perfection.

They are moderately long-lived birds. I have known them attain the age of twelve or fifteen years, though it is quite likely that they live even much longer than that.

Description.—Plumage generally pure white; crest bright sulphur-yellow; ear-coverts, under surface of basal, half of primaries, both upper and under inner webs of secondaries and tertiaries nearly to the tips, a lighter sulphur; in some cases the under web of the tail feathers the same; the basal portions of all the feathers about the head and neck tinged more or less with sulphur, which may be observed by turning them up; irides, black; orbits, white; bill, black; feet, brownish-black. Size—length, 19 in.; wing, 13 in.; tail, $7\frac{1}{2}$ in.; tarsi, $\frac{3}{8}$ in.; bill, $1\frac{1}{2}$ in.

LEADBEATER'S COCKATOO.

PLYCTOLOPHUS LEADBEATERI (Vig.)

Synonyms.—Cacatua Leadbeateri (Gould); Plyctolophus erythropterus (Swain.); Lophochroa Leadbeateri (Bonap.)

Trivial Names.—Leadbeater's Cockatoo; Sir Thomas Mitchell's Cockatoo; Pink Cockatoo; Tricolored Cockatoo; Inca.

Aboriginal Names.—Yel-le-lek (Wimmera); Cal-drin-ga (Lower Murray); Jak-kul-yak-kul (Western Australia.)

Derivation.—Leadbeateri, in honor of Leadbeater, who first introduced the bird to London.

Habitat.—What may be called the central portion of the southern half of the Australian continent; chiefly the districts immediately north of Victoria in New South Wales, and in that parallel of latitude even as far as Western Australia, Mr. Gould stating that it commonly visits Toodyay, this being at the junction of the Swan and Avon Rivers, Western Australia. I have met with it pretty abundantly about the edges of the Mallee scrub (*Eucalyptus dumosa*), Mr. Sturt finding it as far north as Fort Gray in latitude 29 deg. south, and stating that it is a frequenter “of the pine forest (*Callitris pyramidalis*) near Gawler Town, and found wherever that tree abounds.”†

NE of the prettiest sights I ever remember to have seen in connection with the bird-life of Australia was on a spring afternoon on the banks of Lake Benanee, on the Lower Murray, near Euston. A lake worthy of memory in Australian history, as its shores were the battle-field on which the Darling blacks had arrayed their forces, determinately to dispute the right of Sir Thomas Mitchell to pass through their territory. Poor fellows! they seem to have been brave enough, but they soon learned with what deadly power the new-comers were armed against

* Sturt's *Central Australia*. Appendix, p. 35.

† Ibid. Appendix, p. 36.

them, and Sir Thomas, with his handful of convict servants, quickly drove the opposing force of some hundreds of brave men headlong into the Murray, leaving, however, many slain. That was not the only battle fought in that neighbourhood, though the only one recorded in the annals of our land. When the first bands of settlers sent up their sheep and drays, the aborigines soon found out the superior flavour of juicy mutton, or jumbuck as they called it, over the hard dry kangaroo, or peppermint-smelling opossum, and conceiving their right of tribute, or perhaps conceiving nothing at all but the relish of a good meal, seized where they could the fleecy brutes, and literally, ere long, hecatombs of slaughtered victims were smoking on their fires. This naturally enough, perhaps, brought on them terrible reprisals, and I have stood on the spot where, from the opposite bank of the river, far out of reach of spear or boomerang, the new settlers sent their rifle balls crashing into the black camp. It is often very sad to think of what the first impressions made upon the native tribes by our advent must have been. They saw a strange race of men, of a strange color, strangely, but wondrously, clothed and armed, taking up their land, building immense mia-mias, killing off or frightening away their game—asking no leave to settle, offering nothing in return for the appropriated territory—treating them often with unwarrantable cruelty and with undisguised contempt—it would be strange if this were borne by untutored savages without protest of some sort or other; and if they failed to see the difference between the whites taking their land and their game, and their taking the white's sheep and sugar, who can wonder? The early settlement of the land does not redound altogether to the credit of our English name, and one cannot but think that many massacres might have been avoided; while those men—very few indeed let us hope they were—of the baser sort, who, forgetting the very first principles of the most savage hospitality, mixed strychnine with the flour they gave away to the blacks, can only have the undisguised scorn and contempt I was once glad to show to one who boasted of the dastardly deed.

But to return to Benanee from which this episode has led us.

A little flock of about a dozen of these very beautiful birds, alighted on a myall tree (*acacia pendula*), and there for some time disported themselves among its graceful foliage. The tree was in blossom at the time, and its profusion of rich yellow flowers, its silvery drooping branches, with the rose breasts, the bright salmon wings, the tricolored crests, the birds in all conceivable attitudes, now chasing one another, now rising a little above the tree and wheeling round it, now in mere wantonness plucking off the yellow blossoms and tossing them to the ground, with the clear deep blue sky above, just below the waters of the lake rippling to its margin, its bosom covered with innumerable flocks of duck, teal, and the graceful swan, while on the water's edge stood two of the beautiful white egrets (*Herodias egrottoides*), fairy spirits, reigning in the solitude. For half an hour or so, hidden in some undergrowth, I watched the antics and the tricks of these lovely birds, and so fair was all, that, though sadly wanting a specimen, to have disturbed the peaceful joyfulness of the scene by firing my gun would have seemed to me veritable sacrilege in Nature's temple.

These birds do not go in the immense flocks of hundreds like the common white cockatoo. I have never seen more than ten or twelve together. It is shier also and much less noisy than the sulphur-crested bird, its note being somewhat plaintive. Its mode of building and its eggs are similar to the bird last described. In confinement it is never so amusing nor so friendly, and rarely learns to say much more than such short sentences as "pretty cocky." Its food is similar, and its treatment, when domesticated, will be the same as the sulphur-crested. Its rare beauty will always win for it the admiration of those who appreciate form rather than talent.

Description.—Generally white; feathers at the base of the bill crimson; forehead, neck, breast,