

execution of a designing and crafty criminal. Within ten minutes the performance was repeated for the third time, and then either the supply of snakes ran out or the bird was satisfied. He shrewdly glanced this way and that, craning and twisting his neck, and seeming to adjust the lenses of his eyes for near and distant observation. No movement among the leaves seemed to escape him. Two yards and a half or perhaps three yards of live snakes constituted a repast. At any rate, after twenty minutes' passive watchfulness, he sailed up over the trees and away in the direction of his home in the socialistic community of the Shining Calornis."

Many of Mr. Banfield's observations are extremely interesting. Instances—(1.) He proves that the Shining Starling (*Calornis*) is a great plant-distributor. It brings all sorts of seeds and berries from afar to its "nestful tree," and from the ground below there springs quite a nursery of strange plants. (2.) The White Nutmeg-Pigeon (*Myristicivora spilorrhoea*), too, is a plant-distributor. Besides the wild nutmeg (*Myristica insipida*), on which it chiefly lives, it carries other nuts and seeds—quandong, palm, native cabbage (*Scavola*), Burdekin plum, &c. (3.) On one of the islets, where sea-birds were used to breeding upon the ground, goats had been introduced, which interfered much with the brooding birds. To overcome the difficulty the birds (Terns) placed their nests upon bushes or dwarf trees.

Many pretty bird homes are described. For instance :—A White Nutmeg-Pigeon brooding on her nest, at the base of an orchid (*Dendrobium*), fantastically shaded with plumes of the rich old-gold blooms. Another beautiful picture—a set of pale greenish-blue eggs of the Reef-Heron (*Demigretta*), seen sheltered by the same kind of plant dressed in golden flowers.

The only technical portion of the author's bird chapter is a census of 130 birds found frequenting his island. The census might, the author concludes, be raised to about 150 species were he to shoot birds for identification, but to destroy beautiful bird-life forms no part of Mr. Banfield's "religion," all his observations having been carried on by the aid of a good telescope and pair of field-glasses. This immunity from harm has caused many birds to come about his dwelling, and even to remain on a fence-post when he opens and shuts the gate. It perhaps should be mentioned here that Dunk Island and two adjacent islands have been proclaimed a sanctuary for birds, with Mr. Banfield as honorary protector.

No nature-lover can afford to be without this bulky, well written, and fascinating book, which can be obtained for the reasonable sum of eighteen shillings only.

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