

The Emu

Official Organ of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

"Birds of a feather."

VOL. XI.]

1ST JANUARY, 1912.

[PART 3.

Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union.

ELEVENTH (SYDNEY) SESSION.

MINUTES OF THE ELEVENTH ANNUAL SESSION OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION, HELD AT SYDNEY, FROM THE 28TH OCTOBER TO 31ST OCTOBER, 1911.

THE session was attended by the largest number of delegates that as yet have joined in the annual proceedings, the southern States, in particular, being well represented.*

Most of the visiting delegates reached Sydney on Saturday, the 28th October, and were met by the local secretary and other members of the Union residing in New South Wales.

In the afternoon an excursion to Ashton Park to view the proposed new site for the Sydney Zoological Gardens was undertaken. Mr. Griffiths, the Minister for Public Works, very considerately placed a fine launch at the disposal of members. The afternoon was most genial and the weather perfect, and a run around the harbour as far as the Heads was made. The areas of land on the harbour frontages recently resumed by the Government to convert into parks were viewed, and members were greatly impressed by this laudable action of the Government to preserve the beauty spots of the harbour. After viewing these points of interest a return was made to Ashton Park, contiguous to the city, and close to Mosman Bay. A pleasant walk through sylvan glades and amid wild birds and flowers occupied the balance

* Members and friends who attended the session :—*Victoria*.—Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Nicholls, Mr. and Mrs. C. Cole, Mr. A. J. and Miss Campbell, Mr. and Mrs. Mattingley, Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Leach, Miss M. Hayman, Mrs. Israel, Mrs. Wickham, Dr. W. J. Long, Messrs. O. Rosenhain, Mowling (2), J. Barr, D. Le Souëf. *New South Wales*.—Mr. and Mrs. H. Burrell, Dr. A. E. D'Ombraïn, Messrs. C. Coles, A. Hamilton, G. J. Broinowski, Basset Hull, A. S. Le Souëf, H. Sharpe, J. Dun. *Queensland*.—Mr. C. Barnard. *South Australia*.—Messrs. J. W. Mellor and S. S. Stokes. *Western Australia*.—Mr. A. W. Milligan. *Tasmania*.—Col. W. V. Legge.

of the afternoon. The suitability of Ashton Park as a site for an up-to-date Zoo was apparent, since it would be situate in the heart of virgin country typical of the original conditions of the harbour frontage as it appeared to the early settlers. Afternoon tea, provided by Messrs. C. Coles and A. S. Le Souëf and presided over by Mrs. Le Souëf, was served *en route* to Circular Quay, and the city reached at 5.30 p.m.

In the evening the first general business of the session was commenced at the British Medical Association Rooms at 8 p.m., the president, Mr. A. J. Campbell, Col. Mem. B.O.U., in the chair. Letters of apology for their absence were read from several members.

The minutes of the tenth annual session were read and confirmed, on the motion of D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., and Col. W. V. Legge, Col. Mem. B.O.U.

The annual report was read by the acting hon. secretary, Mr. A. H. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., and, after considerable discussion, was adopted, on the motion of Mr. Chas. Barnard, seconded by Col. W. V. Legge. (For report see p. 166.)

Col. W. V. Legge, in seconding the report, stated that he was of opinion that permits should be given to collect specimens of birds in New Guinea for scientific purposes only.

Mr. C. Coles stated that he was heart and soul a bird protector, and considered that protection should be accorded birds generally. He spoke as a trader in plumes, and took exception to the protection of the Birds-of-Paradise, which do not mature and obtain their gorgeous liveries until four years old. He further stated that when the male bird gets his good plumes he leaves the female, and is then useless as a progenitor; therefore, it does not do any harm to collect fully-plumed Birds-of-Paradise, since Nature has already protected them, because the birds, in their sombre plumage during their mating period, are not sought for by collectors and plumage-hunters. He believed in protecting Egrets, but considered the trade in Birds-of-Paradise skins and plumes legitimate.

Mr. Leach asked for authority for these remarkable statements by Mr. Coles, as also did Col. W. V. Legge.

Mr. Coles, in reply, stated that he made these assertions through a deputy—a Mr. Richards (a collector of his), recently massacred by savages. His deputy was a keen observer of New Guinea avifauna. His (Mr. Coles's) own observations, and those of his father (a veteran taxidermist), showed that it took six years for Bower-Birds to come to mature plumage. This, to some extent, he contended, proved his statement.

Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., said no proof whatever existed for Mr. Coles's statements. Bower-Birds at seven years of age were active breeders.

Mr. J. W. Mellor supported the report with reference to allowing permits, as suggested by the Union.

Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., said that natives should not be allowed to collect specimens.

Mr. A. S. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., asked for what term the suspension of the proclamation now in force in Papua was sought by traders.

Mr. Leach asked why Australia should be made the "happy hunting ground" of foreign collectors.

Mrs. Burrell said that domestic cats gone wild were great destroyers of bird-life.

A general discussion *re* the alleged wholesale poisoning of birds mentioned in the report then took place, in which Messrs. Chas. Cole, J. Leach, and E. B. Nicholls took part.

Mr. C. Coles said that it was a wise act of the Commonwealth Government to prohibit the importation of ferrets. The mongoose, released in Fiji, had already mated with the rats there, and the hybrid destroyed birds.

The president then read an appalling list of birds destroyed for their plumes, as catalogued in the lists of recent London auction sales of birds' plumage.

The hon. treasurer's report and financial statement were then read by Mr. Barr, in the absence of the hon. treasurer. A slight deficit occurring was then explained by Mr. A. H. Mattingley and the chairman as due to the production of an extra part of *The Emu*, issued as a record of the Queensland session. The financial statement was adopted, on the motion of Dr. Long, seconded by Mr. Chas. Cole.

The librarian mentioned that no report had been prepared by him, and verbally stated what had been done with regard to the library during the past year.

The meeting adjourned at 11.15 p.m.

Next morning (29th October) a large party entrained for the National Park, under the leadership of Mr. Basset Hull. The weather was most pleasant, and the park presented a fascinating sight, bedecked as it was with wild flowers and blossoming shrubs. Mr. Frank Farnell, chairman of the trustees of the park, very kindly had motor and other boats awaiting the visitors. The party divided into two sections—one going down the salt water of the Port Hacking River in the launch, and the other in rowing boats up the fresh water. Both parties returned at mid-day for refreshments, and exchanged boats and trips for the afternoon. The beauties of the park were greatly admired. Many birds were seen nesting, and, owing to immunity from harm, all appeared very tame, letting persons approach close to them without exhibiting alarm. In the evening the party returned to Sydney, after a most enjoyable outing.

GENERAL MEETING.

On Monday, the 30th October, the adjourned general business meeting was resumed at 8 p.m. at the British Medical Association rooms.

RECEIPTS AND

For Year ended

£ s. d.	£ s. d.	RECEIPTS.
16 3 1		Balance—General Fund
18 6 2		Col. Figure Fund
172 15 9		Subscriptions
12 17 6		„ In Advance
14 15 6		Sales— <i>The Emu</i>
20 2 2		Part 3, vol. x.
1 0 0		Part 3, vol. vii.
	6 6 0	Col. Figure Fund—Donations
	8 14 0	Brisbane Lecture
	1 0 0	Advertisements
16 0 0		
	0 12 2	Postage
	1 4 1	Exchange
	0 3 0	Covers
1 19 3		
20 19 3		General Fund Dr. Balance
<hr/>		
294 18 8		

(Signed) J. A. ROSS, *Hon. Treasurer.*

30th June, 1911.

ASSETS AND

At 30th

£ s. d.	£ s. d.	ASSETS.
217 6 0		<i>The Emu</i> in Stock, say
25 0 0		Library
15 0 0		Illustration Blocks
	24 0 0	Subscriptions—In Arrears, say
	12 17 6	Less Prepaid
11 2 6		
30 11 2		Coloured Figure Fund Credit Balance
<hr/>		
298 19 8		

EXPENDITURE

30th June, 1911.

[illegible]

Audited and found correct.

Z. GRAY, F.C.A., *Hon. Auditor.*

14th September, 1911.

LIABILITIES

June, 1911.

LIABILITIES.							£	s.	d.
General Fund—Debit	..	..	..	..	..	..	20	19	3
Balance	..	..	..	..	..	..	278	0	5
							<hr/>		
							£298	19	8

The chairman read the following royal and vice-royal letters :—

Buckingham Palace,

22nd July, 1911.

DEAR MR. CAMPBELL,—I have duly received the tenth volume of *The Emu* which you have been good enough to send through Colonel C. S. Ryan for the acceptance of the King and Queen.

I have submitted the volume to Their Majesties, and pointed out to them their likenesses on page 355, and have received Their Majesties' commands to request you to be good enough to convey their thanks to the Council for their kindness in sending the book.

I am, yours faithfully,

E. W. WALLINGTON.

A. J. Campbell, Esq.,

President Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union,
Zoological Gardens, Melbourne.

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

(GOVERNOR-GENERAL.)

MR. CAMPBELL AND GENTLEMEN,—It has gratified me not a little to receive the assurance of your loyal devotion to our most gracious Sovereign, King George. The Union which you represent has been specially honoured with the patronage of Their Majesties the King and Queen, who have thereby shown their interest in the object which you have set before yourselves.

I thank you for your congratulations upon my appointment as Governor-General of the Commonwealth, and it is a pleasure to me to realize that, inasmuch as you include within the sphere of your operations the sister Dominion of New Zealand, I am the recipient on this occasion of a courteous compliment from fellow-subjects of His Majesty both within and without the Commonwealth.

The study of bird-life, and the protection of rare and beautiful species from destruction, are objects which have my warmest sympathy, and which I should be glad to see furthered in every part of our world-wide Empire.

I ask you to convey to the members of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union an expression of my interest in their work and of my good wishes for their continued and increasing prosperity.

DENMAN.

25th August, 1911.

The retiring president, Mr. A. J. Campbell, Col. Mem. B.O.U., then read his address, dealing with

A HISTORY OF AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGICAL RESEARCH.

SUCH a work, were it published, would form one of the most fascinating, interesting, not to say valuable, chapters ever printed; but where is one to get the lifetime and opportunities needed to delve into the literature of the world and weave, chronologically, a sure skein of information pertaining to Australian ornithology?

It is not generally known that an extensive historical collection of fourteen thousand books, pamphlets, maps, &c., concerning Australasia and Polynesia from the sixteenth century—is in the Commonwealth Parliamentary Library, the invaluable gift to the nation of one of our members, Mr. Edward Augustus Petherick, F.L.S., &c. In connection with and founded upon that collection Mr. Petherick has compiled a manuscript bibliography, in 66 vols., containing not less than 100,000 titles, classed and chronicled according to subjects—Voyages, Geography and Exploration, Natural and Physical Sciences, &c.

1508.—In glancing through the ornithological section you will find that the first mention of birds by explorers in the Australian region (*i.e.*, taking the region zoogeographically from Wallace's line on the west to the Hawaiian Islands on the east) is as early as 1508, when they found the "Divine Bird," or the "Bird of God," as the Bird-of-Paradise was first called. But, keeping more strictly to the Australian sub-region, we find the early dawn of Australian ornithology was as poetic as it was prophetic. After its discovery by the Portuguese, our continent bore the name of *Psittacorum Regio*—"The Land of Parrots."*

1697.—Then there occurs a long blank in time till the discovery in 1697 of Black Swans on a river named "Swanen Rivier" by Vlamingh, the Dutch explorer. The English translation states:—"January 7th.—The crew returned on board, bringing two young Black Swans" (p. 123). "11th.—At break of day we again ascended the river, and saw many Swans (our boat knocked over nine or ten), some 'Rotganzen,' Geese, some Divers, &c." "On the 12th (January) I again went on shore, with our chief pilot, some sailors, and two blacks. . . . The men, the birds, the Swans, the Rotganzen, Koopganzen, the Geese, the Cockatoos, the Parroquets, &c., all fled at the sight of us." "15th (lat. 30 deg. 17 min.) we proceeded a league and a half inland; but we saw no men, or fresh water, but several footprints of men and prints like those of the dog and of the Cassowary."

1699.—In his "Voyage to New Holland," Dampier mentions

*A quarter of a century ago, Mr. Petherick pointed out the fact that when European navigators first discovered this Australasian Region, they named it the "BIRD COUNTRY" from the great number of birds observed, the Western Coast being described on the earlier maps as the *Psittacorum Regio*, or "Land of Parrots," and the northern part (New Guinea) as the *Terra Piccinacoli* or "Land of the Bird-of-Paradise."

"Sea-fowls like Gannets, and a sort of Sea-Mews; few land-fowls—Eagles, five or six sorts of small birds, all singing; water-fowls—Ducks, Curlews, Galdens, Crab-catchers, Cormorants, Gulls, Pelicans, and other water-fowl (plate with four figures, pp. 122, 123), similar birds and white Parrots (p. 139), Boobies, Noddies (plates 142, 143), Crows, Hawks, Kites, Turtle-Doves, smaller birds, and sea-fowl (p. 153)."

1726.—Six species of Birds-of-Paradise are described by Valentyn in his great work on the East Indies.

1766.—Some sea-birds are described by Linnæus.

1772-75.—Birds seen during Cook's second voyage, and hitherto unknown, are described in a manuscript by Wm. Anderson, and Dr. Reinold Forster remarks that the number of new birds was "astonishing"—104. "It is," he observes, "a received notion that birds of many colours do not sing well; we have here numerous instances to the contrary. The wild forests of New Zealand and the cultivated groves of O-Taheitee resound alike with the harmony of the shining songsters"—a very early correction of a popular error.

1779.—Webber made 46 drawings of birds during Cook's last voyage, species useful to Latham in his "General Synopsis," 1781-85.

Running down the years, we can only afford time and space at present to note a striking title here and there up to the period when John Gould commenced to consolidate his memorial scientific work.

1789-90.—Phillip's Voyage—Birds of New South Wales, with 20 plates and descriptions from Latham's "Synopsis."

1790.—Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales, with 26 plates birds, &c. By John White, Surgeon-General to the Settlement.

1791-92.—The bibliographer notes there are in the Sydney Public Library 101 beautiful coloured drawings of birds, chiefly from Norfolk Island, of this date.

1793.—Settlement at Port Jackson, Tench; the Cassowary or Emu described: its eggs, &c. (pp. 173, 175).

1794.—Zoology of New Holland. By Geo. Shaw, M.D. Figures by James Sowerby of five birds—(1) Nonpareil Parrot (Rosella), (2) Ground-Parrot, (3) the Embroidered Merops, (4) Antarctic Pigeon, (5) Spotted-shouldered Thrush.

Birds of Australia. By Dr. Shaw, in Pinkerton's "Geography," 1807 and 1817.

1798.—New Species *Muscicapa* from New South Wales. By Thomas Davies (Major-General).—*Trans. Linn. Soc.*, vol. iv., pp. 240-242.

1798.—Extraordinary Flight of Sooty Petrels at Hunter's Island, Bass Strait (estimated at over 150 millions).—Flinders, i., p. clxx.

1800.—Lacépède mentions *Prion vittatus* and *Pelecanoides urinatrix*.

1802.—Description of *Menura superba*. By Thomas Davies.—*Trans. Linn. Soc.*, vi., p. 207.

1802.—Lyre-Bird, "Mountain" Eagle, and Emu, with plates.—Collins's "New South Wales."

1806.—The announcement of the first Australian bird book is of peculiar interest. It reads—

"Proposals for publishing by subscription 'The Birds of New

South Wales, with their Natural History,' by John William Lewin, A.L.S., &c., &c. N.B.—This work will be sent to England by His Majesty's ship *Buffalo*, under care of a gentleman, for immediate publication. The terms of subscription are:—Half the subscription money to be paid at the time of subscribing, and the other half on the delivery of the work." (The subscription for the bird volume was £2 2s.)

1808.—By advertisement, "Mr. J. Lewin begs to acquaint the officers, civil and military, and their ladies, who honoured with their names the list of subscribers to his intended work entitled 'The Birds of New South Wales, with their Natural History,' that he has received advice . . . regarding the transmittal of the first volume subscribed for here."

There were 18 plates in this issue, and a copy in Sydney Public Library is dated 1813 [?]. There were re-issues in 1822 and 1838, with 8 additional plates, namely:—Scarlet Creeper, White-eared Honey-sucker, Crested Flycatcher, White-breasted Honey-sucker, Yellow-breasted Thrush, Black-crowned Honey-sucker, Common Creeper, and Crested Shrike.

1807.—Cassowaries, Péron, Atlas, part v., pl. 36, 41; 1824, pl. 66, 67.

1824.—Anatomical Structure of the Cassowary of New Holland (*Casuarus novæ-hollandiæ*), by Robert Knox.—*Edin. Phil. Journ.*, x., pp. 132-140.

1825.—Description of *Psittacus fieldi*, a New Species of Parrot from Australia. By Wm. Swainson.—*Quart. Journ. Sci.*, xix., pp. 198-200. Also, by same author, "Characters and Affinities of Several New Birds from Australia."—*Zool. Journ.*, v., pp. 463-484.

1826.—Description of the Australian Birds in the Collection of the Linnean Society. By N. A. Vigors and Thomas Horsfield.—*Trans. Linn. Soc.*, xv., pp. 170-331.

1826.—Zoologie du Voyage *L'Uranie* et *La Physicienne* includes 31 plates of birds. Quoy et Gaimard.

1825-6.—Geographical Distribution of Certain Petrels. By R. P. Lesson.

1827.—Aves: a Collection presented to the Linnean Society. By Phillip Parker King, R.N.—"Survey of Coasts of Australia," ii., pp. 416-423.

1833-4.—Ten Coloured Plates Parrots, &c. Two Expeditions by Sturt.

1831.—Habits of the Musk-Duck (*Hydrobates lobatus*, Temm.) By Lieut. Breton.—*Proc. Zool. Soc.*, ii., pp. 19-23.

1832-4.—Wanderings in New South Wales—Lyre-Bird, &c. By Dr. George Bennett.

1836.—We now arrive at Gould's first contributions to the Zoological Society's *Proceedings*—"On Australian Birds, with Characters of the New Species."

1837.—And his "Synopsis of the Birds of Australia and the Adjacent Islands," part i. (44 species).

In going through this great mosaic of references to Australian ornithology, what forcibly strikes one is the vast amount of research performed by private enterprise, or for adventure, if you like, compared with what has and should have been done nationally. Of course, such expeditions as those of Dampier, Cook, Flinders, Stokes, and others were national, because subsidized by

the Navy—though not strictly scientific—but the great bulk of detailed ornithological research has been performed and published privately, Gould's great pictorial volumes eclipsing all. Ever since Gouldian days, excepting the works of Ramsay and A. J. North, of the Australian Museum, all publications on Australian ornithology have been done privately—Diggles, Campbell, Broinowski, Robert Hall, Leach, Littler, Lucas and Le Souëf, and now we have Gregory Mathews in the throes of a stupendous work—a coloured figure for every Australian bird—undoubtedly a national undertaking, which should not have been left to private enterprise. Were it not for such patriots as Gould, Mathews, and others, to think of what would become of Australian Natural History is to contemplate the possibility of an everlasting disgrace overtaking our nation for its neglectfulness. The same applies to field collectors. How little has been done by State museums compared with private individuals or collectors privately subsidized!

Now, however, the Commonwealth Government is setting an excellent example since it has acquired the great Northern Territory. One important expedition at present in the field has attached to it a collecting ornithologist (by the way, a member of the R.A.O.U.) It is hoped that State museums will send out zoological collectors to little-known corners of the Commonwealth for material before it becomes scarce, or altogether disappears (better even than sending an expensive expedition to Antarctica, costing thousands of pounds), and not leave the national collections to be acquired piecemeal from private persons; and, as to material which has already been acquired or donated, let Governments be liberal enough to subsidize their museums, so that specimens may be properly displayed, and not procured to be stowed away in vaults, labelled in obsolete nomenclature.

Not alone have private persons outstripped Governments at collecting, but collectors from foreign institutions, attracted by the wealth and novelty of the Australian region, have touched our shores at various places, and have carried off rare ornithological booty—to wit, the Swedish expedition to the North-West, under the capable leadership of Dr. Eric Mjöberg, which has just departed with over 800 specimens in ornithology alone, besides numerous birds' nests and eggs. No blame to such eminent visitors or institutions: all nations are equal in the race for science. Yet the Commonwealth Government should control these collections, if even for scientific reasons, such as regarding types. Unless we possess types it is difficult, or sometimes impossible, to determine whether a specimen is new or belongs to a species already described. Last year Professor Alfred J. Ewart, of the Melbourne University, in an article on "Scientific Explorations," in the public press mentioned this point regarding botany. It equally applies to ornithology, and zoology in general.

In conclusion, returning to Mr. Petherick's Australian bibliography, and to the fact that the greater amount of Natural History work has been performed privately for the nation as against what the nation officially has undertaken for itself, would it not be opportune for the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union, now met in session, to bring under the notice of the Commonwealth Government the need of proceeding with the publication of this valuable bibliography, and to respectfully urge that at least the part (possibly containing 1,400 or 1,500 titles) pertaining to the avifauna of Australia be commenced. This in itself would form a reference complete and invaluable, not only to scientists and students, but to the people and politicians. No country in the world has so complete a bibliography from its very earliest beginnings as that compiled for Australasia by Mr. Petherick—the results of the “labours of love” during the well-spent leisure hours of a busy life.

On behalf of Capt. S. A. White, of South Australia, Mr. E. B. Nicholls read a letter eulogizing the work of the retiring president, Mr. A. J. Campbell, and also that of a former (now acting) hon. secretary, Mr. A. H. Mattingley.

Mr. G. J. Broinowski spoke in favour of Mr. Campbell's work for ornithology.

Col. W. V. Legge spoke at length in terms of the highest praise of the retiring president's work for the Union, and moved a vote of thanks to him, coupled with the name of the acting hon. secretary. Seconded by Mr. D. Le Souëf, and carried with acclamation.

NEW OFFICE-BEARERS.

Election of office-bearers resulted in the return of the following:—President, Mr. J. W. Mellor; vice-presidents, Messrs. Robt. Hall, C.M.B.O.U., and A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S.; hon. secretary, Mr. F. E. Wilson; hon. treasurer, Mr. Z. Gray; hon. librarian, Mr. Dudley Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S.; hon. editors of *The Emu*, Messrs. A. J. Campbell, C.M.B.O.U., and C. L. Barrett; hon. press correspondent, Mr. E. Brooke Nicholls. Hon. State secretaries—Victoria, Mr. F. E. Wilson; South Australia, Captain S. A. White; New South Wales, Mr. A. S. Le Souëf; Western Australia, Mr. T. Carter M.B.O.U.; Tasmania, Mr. A. Butler; Queensland, Dr. Hamlyn Harris, F.Z.S.; New Zealand, Mr. H. Hamilton. Additional members of the Executive—Messrs. A. F. Basset Hull (New South Wales), Dr. C. S. Ryan (Victoria), Dr. A. M. Morgan, (South Australia), Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc., and Dr. Geo. Horne (Victoria), Dr. Wm. M'Gillivray (New South Wales), Mr. C. A. Barnard (Queensland), and Mr. A. W. Milligan (Western Australia).

The newly-elected president, Mr. John W. Mellor, then took the chair, and thanked members for the honour conferred upon him. He would do his best to forward the Union's great work and high aims.

Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc., moved, and Mr. D. Le Souëf seconded—"That, while opposed to the use of trinomials, this meeting considers that each sub-species should be so designated by the Check-list Committee as to indicate—(1) that it is a sub-species, and (2) the species of which it is a sub-species." Mr. Broinowski supported the motion, and suggested that sub-species be only indicated by a number, and not by a name.

Col. W. V. Legge said that he was against the trinomial system of nomenclature, and was an adherent of the binomial. If considered a sub-species, a bird should be placed under the ordinary specific name.

Mr. Basset Hull supported the motion, and mentioned that it would be sufficient for all purposes were the specific name only indicated by a number and the sub-specific by a letter.

A paper entitled "Fallacies of the Feather Trade" was then read by Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S., wherein a succinct review of the rise and growth of the trade in the plumage of birds was recounted. Statistics from consular reports, as well as those from feather-trade journals themselves, were quoted in support of the insatiable demand for the plumage of birds. Statistics showed that incredible numbers of birds were annually slain to supply the trade. A revulsion of feeling against the destruction of thousands of useful birds for the sake of their plumes as articles of adornment has set in. It was to be hoped that all would do their utmost to prevent the totally unnecessary trade in the plumage of wild birds.

Col. W. V. Legge, as an old Indian resident, supported all statements made in the paper.

Mr. A. Le Souëf said that the Huia of New Zealand required protection.

Mr. Broinowski mentioned that one dealer in Sydney had sold 498 Lyre-Birds' tails last year, while another dealer, in face of a prohibitory law, sent 800 Lyre-Birds' tails out of Sydney. He considered the exportation of 800 tails meant the destruction of 1,000 Lyre-Birds.

Mr. C. Coles questioned the accuracy of the statement regarding the Lyre-Birds' tails exported.

Mr. Basset Hull stated that of his own knowledge 2,000 Lyre-Birds' tails had been exported in three years.

Mr. D. Le Souëf supported the statements of Messrs. Broinowski and Hull.

Col. W. V. Legge moved—"That this Union renews the request made at the last Hobart session that the Field Naturalists' Association of Tasmania and other persons interested in bird-life should approach the State Government with a view to the acclimatization of the Lyre-Bird (*Menura*) in the highlands of Tasmania, owing to the danger that this beautiful bird is being practically exterminated by introduced foxes and illicit shooting

in Victoria and New South Wales." Mr. J. A. Leach seconded, and suggested greater vigilance by the Customs Department, if possible. The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. J. A. Leach moved—"That the Commonwealth Government be apprised of the great destruction of Lyre-Birds and the taking of their eggs." Mr. A. Hamilton supported the motion, which was carried.

General Business.—Mr. A. J. Campbell moved—"That the Union approach the Commonwealth Government with a view to getting Mr. Petherick's bibliography concerning Australian ornithology published, it being a purely national work." Seconded by Mr. D. Le Souëf, and carried.

Mr. D. Le Souëf moved a vote of thanks to the Government of New South Wales for their praiseworthy act in the resumption of lands for parks around Sydney. Col. W. V. Legge supported the motion, which was unanimously carried.

Mr. O. Rosenhain moved—"That, out of respect to the memory of a devoted follower of ornithology in Australia—John Gilbert, the coadjutor of John Gould—a wreath be placed on the tablet erected to his memory in St. James' Church, King-street, Sydney." Mr. A. J. Campbell supported the motion, which was carried unanimously. A sub-committee, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. H. Burrell and Mr. O. Rosenhain, was appointed to approach the rev. the rector of the church for permission, and to carry into effect the resolution. (See p. 169, and Plate XV.)

Mr. J. W. Mellor stated how the Government of South Australia had placed Mallee-Fowl on Kangaroo Island, and had reserved a large area for acclimatization purposes, and had erected a fence enclosing it. This was due to the energy displayed by the Ornithological Association of South Australia, and to the original suggestion of the R.A.O.U. when camped on Kangaroo Island six years ago.

Col. Legge moved, and Mr. Rosenhain seconded, that a vote of thanks be conveyed to the Government of South Australia, and, "That in the opinion of this Union the remainder of the unalienated land on Kangaroo Island should, if possible, be devoted to the purpose of an extended sanctuary for Mallee-Fowl (*Lipoa*) and other birds likely to be destroyed by introduced vermin on the mainland; and that this Session exhorts and encourages the South Australian Ornithological Association and other interested bodies to persevere in their praiseworthy efforts for the reservation of land on Kangaroo Island for the purpose mentioned." This was carried unanimously.

In accordance with his previous notice of motion, Mr. J. A. Leach moved—"That the retiring president, Mr. A. J. Campbell, C.M.B.O.U., who has done notable service in the cause of ornithology, be elected an honorary associate of the R.A.O.U." Seconded by Mr. A. Mattingley, and carried.

Mr. J. Barr moved—"That the Education Department of New South Wales be congratulated for their successful inauguration

of Bird Day into the State schools, and for the formation of the Gould League of Bird-Lovers." This was supported by Mr. A. J. Campbell, and carried.

Mr. A. Mattingley proposed—"That the Commonwealth Government be urged to proclaim that all scientific material and specimens collected be *vised* by the Commonwealth Government before being taken out of the territories of the Commonwealth, and that the type-specimens be deposited at the museum of the State in which they were collected, and the scientific results be published in an Australian scientific journal before duplicate specimens be allowed to be taken out of the Commonwealth." Seconded by Mr. J. A. Leach, and carried unanimously.

Mr. E. B. Nicholls moved—"That the Railway Departments of the different States be asked to prohibit the transport of protected birds as freight (as shown in the South Australian Railway Guide)." Seconded by Mr. J. A. Leach, and carried.

Mr. A. Mattingley moved—"That the Commonwealth be mapped out into ornithological districts, and that hon. secretaries be appointed to each to record the migrations, &c., of birds." Mr. J. Leach seconded the motion, and suggested that the Education Departments of the different States be invited to assist. Carried unanimously.

Mr. C. Coles pointed out that the apparent indifference of New South Wales members of the Union as a body was due to the fact that no ornithological society was in existence in Sydney. He sincerely hoped that some action would be taken to bring them together and unite them.

The president said the Council would do their utmost to consummate the idea, and hoped a local ornithological society would be formed. The South Australian Ornithological Society started with only three members, and now it was a large and influential body.

Mr. Chas. Cole said that the Bird Observers' Club of Victoria, which started with only a few enthusiasts, was now a powerful society.

It was decided to hold the next annual session in Tasmania.

Proposed by Mr. O. Rosenhain, and seconded by Mr. Chas. Barnard—"That a catalogue of the books belonging to the R.A.O.U. library be published." Carried.

Votes of Thanks.—The following were unanimously carried:—

- (1) To the Minister of Public Works for the use of the launch.
- (2) To the Trustees of the Australian Museum for placing the type-specimens and other material at the disposal of the Check-list Committee.
- (3) To the Trustees, National Park, for the use of their motor launch.
- (4) To the British Medical Association for use of their rooms for purposes of meeting.

The meeting then terminated, at 11.20 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS ELECTED.

Victoria.—A. Rutter Clarke, Melbourne ; Henry Anjou, Murrumbidgee ; Dr. J. W. Barrett, Melbourne ; C. F. Belcher, M.A., LL.B., Geelong ; Thos. Bell, Antwerp ; Henry Brew, Ballarat ; Chief Inspector Fisheries and Game, Melbourne ; Rolf Crawley, Warrnambool ; St. Eloy D'Alton, Dimboola ; John Hookes, Melbourne ; Francis Keep, Melbourne ; Dr. W. J. Long, Bendigo ; A. W. Milligan, Melbourne ; R. O. Rosenhain, Balaclava ; Leslie Stuart, Melbourne ; E. N. Symonds, Balwyn ; J. Tattersson, Morwell.

New South Wales.—Dr. G. Bowen Thomas, Ashfield ; J. H. Ferguson, 167 Phillip-street, Sydney ; A. E. Hamilton Lecturer Training College, Sydney ; Mr. John Dun, 15 Muston-street, Mosman ; Harry Sharpe, c/o *Evening News* staff, Sydney.

Queensland.—Noel V. I. Agnew, Moreton Bay ; Mrs. S. A. W. Barnard, Rockhampton ; A. H. Chippendall, Bundaberg ; C. Cook, jun., Bundaberg ; Richard Cruise, Toowoomba ; C. C. Dornbusch, Warwick ; D. R. Eden, Brisbane ; Dr. Hamlyn Harris, Brisbane ; Wm. Harris, Toowoomba ; Mrs. Annie C. Hogarth, Toowoomba ; Dr. Hurworth, Brisbane ; Miss Alba Jodrell, Toowoomba ; Major Jas. Johnston, Bundaberg ; Dr. T. Harvey Johnston, Brisbane ; C. A. Lambert, Warwick ; Lewis H. Maynard, Bundaberg ; G. E. M'Donald, Cooroy ; J. A. M'Lean, Mackay ; W. R. Parker, Brisbane ; P. W. Pears, Warwick ; H. E. Price, Toowoomba ; Dr. Thos. A. Price, Toowoomba ; Queensland Museum, Brisbane ; J. N. White, Bundaberg ; G. A. Young, Bundaberg ; Mrs. Horace Young, Bundaberg.

South Australia.—E. Elkan, Semaphore ; Stanley S. Stokes, Walkerville.

Western Australia.—Lachlan M'K. Burns, Subiaco ; John T. Tunney, Kojonup ; Dr. R. Soderberg, Royal Swedish Consulate, Fremantle.

Tasmania.—Clive E. Lord, Hobart.

New Zealand.—W. R. B. Oliver, Christchurch.

England.—R. Owen Mathews, Watford.

Holland.—G. L. Van den Berg, Leiden, Holland.

PUBLIC LECTURE.

ON Tuesday, 31st October, at 8 p.m., a public lecture, entitled "Australian Tropic Islands and Coral Strands," was given at King's Hall, Phillip-street, the lecture being under the auspices of the Wild Life Preservation Society of New South Wales. Mr. W. W. Froggatt, F.L.S., Government Entomologist, presided. The entertainment, which was exceedingly well illustrated with lime-light views, dealt mainly with the narrative and results of the Union's expedition to the Capricorn Islands, 1910, augmented with other Barrier Reef natural history. The speakers were Mr. Brooke Nicholls, Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., Mr. J. A. Leach, M.Sc., and Mr. A. H. E. Mattingley, C.M.Z.S. The lecture, although a success, resulted in a financial loss (£3 9s. 10d.)

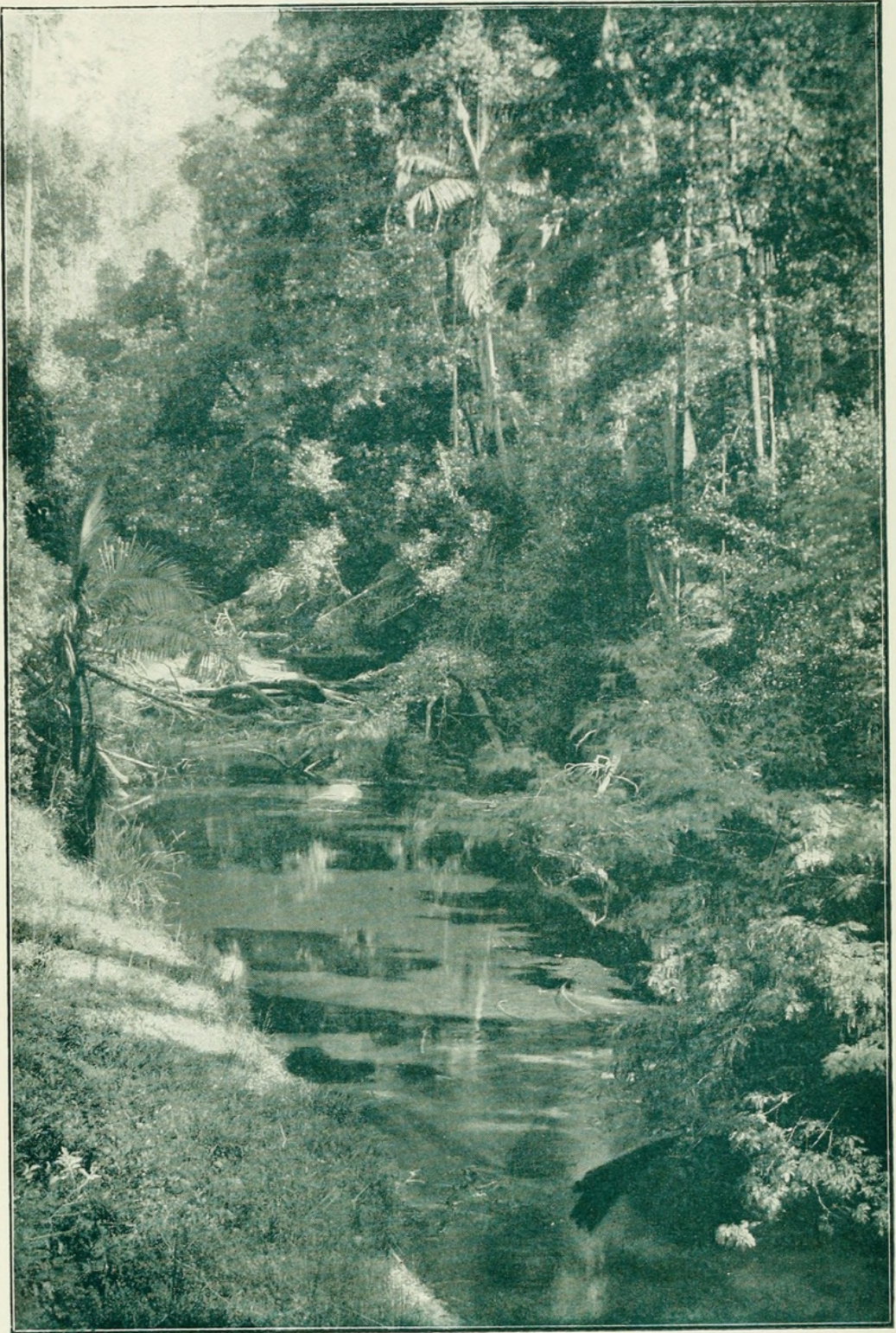
WORKING EXCURSION AND CAMP-OUT.

ON Wednesday, 1st November, some members, under the leadership of Mr. A. S. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S., proceeded at 8 a.m. to Ourimbah, about 56 miles from Sydney, for an extended working excursion to the sub-tropical scrubs, whilst others journeyed to Gosford, a picturesque spot near Ourimbah, by the afternoon's train for a similar purpose, the balance of the camping party reaching Ourimbah the following morning.

The members who left on Wednesday camped about 3 miles from the Ourimbah station, some going about 4 miles further, to the farm of Mr. G. H. Jaques. Twenty-one members attended.* Although a great many birds were observed, practically few were noticed nesting. Interesting pictures of birds building or feeding their young were obtained by Mr. Rosenhain and Mr. H. Burrell, while Messrs. Barnard, Burrell, and C. Coles took a long excursion into the back country on Sunday, and were rewarded by glimpses of very fine rough scenery and numerous birds, though nests were not seen. For this particular district it was just a little too late, for most of the birds seen had young. The camp was broken up on Monday (4th November), to enable members to visit other parts of New South Wales, notably the Hawkesbury River and the Blue Mountains. Mr. A. J. Campbell arrived the day after the break-up, and, together with the president (Mr. J. W. Mellor), remained the allotted time—to the end of the week. It should be explained that No. 1 camp was on Mr. Lowe's farm, about three miles from Ourimbah station. With plenty of green sward about, the tents were comfortably situated, while the cook's quarters were an unused outhouse well stocked with choice provisions (thanks to the thoughtfulness of Messrs. A. S. Le Souëf and Charles Barnard). In front, not far away, the stream—"Ourimbah" of the aborigines—at summer level, meandered through a fringe of trees, which afforded safe retreat for many birds, including a Lyre-Bird, observed by two members of the party for some time. Behind were timbered gullies, and ranges around, full of interest for naturalists. A visitor from Sydney, who, with others, spent a night at this camp, has recorded in the *Sydney Evening News* (16/11/11) that—

"No pen may describe the awakening of the bush with the first streaks of dawn. It was then that one became impressed with the absolute fallacy that Australian birds are songless. Bred and born in the heart of rural England, with all the instinctive love of my woodlands, I must admit that I had no idea that anything equalling in richness the song of the Thrush and the Black-bird—they are my favourite song-birds—was to be found in Australia. But after that first experience of listening to an

* Mr. and Mrs. Nicholls, Mr. and Mrs. Burrell, Mr. and Mrs. Leach, Mrs. Israel, Messrs. Mowling (2), Cole, Barr, Stokes, Rosenhain, Milligan, Mellor, A. S. Le Souëf, Barnard, C. Coles, Drs. Long and D'Ombraïn. At Gosford were Mr. and Mrs. Mattingley, Mrs. Cole, Mrs. Wickham, and Miss Hayman.



Scene on Ourimbah Creek, New South Wales.
Home of Azure Kingfisher (*Alcyon azurea*), Spectacled Flycatcher
(*Piezorhynchus gouldi*), Brown Fly-eater (*Pseudogerygone fusca*),
Yellow-eared Honey-eater (*Ptilotis lewini*), &c.

FROM A PHOTO. BY A. J. CAMPBELL.

Australian bird chorus greeting the early dawn I fearlessly confess that there is nothing in an English wood which can beat it for richness of note or variety of song.

"First of all there began a gentle twittering of the smaller birds. Almost immediately a pretty little Blue Wren appeared on the bough of a tree near my tent, and trilled a bright song as gaily as a Robin Redbreast. Soon the whole neighbourhood was flooded with song as of one magnificent, harmonious chorus, throughout which individual songsters poured forth full-throated, melodious solos. There were three birds which pleased me the most—the Brush-Cuckoo the Yellow-breasted Whistler, or Thickhead, and the Bell-Bird.

"The Brush Cuckoo sang a perfect three-bar song, almost exactly resembling a portion of the chorus sung in the first act of 'Faust.' The Whistler had no distinct tune; it gave us a series of merry whistling, in crescendos, and terminating with a joyous exclamation. This bird is a gem, and has such a repertoire that at different times of the day it completely changes its whistle, but always it is delightfully full and clear.

"The Bell-Birds gave the effect of the 'Anvil Chorus' by their constant 'Ting, ting, ting,' from which bell-like note the bird derives its name. How is it possible to describe such a chorus? The noise was not deafening; it was a constant warbling, carolling, and whistling, with distinct flute-like solos, which could be heard from every side of this great natural aviary."

Yet, notwithstanding this enthusiastic description, the camp was broken up somewhat precipitately. Possibly the restless craving for sight-seeing of some of the members overcame their original intention of bird-observing, for no fault could be found with the executive for the locality chosen. The cook, who remained till the end of his term, which he improved by catching water-lizards, with more or less success, for the Sydney Zoo, facetiously named the place "Skedaddle Camp."

Messrs. Campbell and Mellor elected to accept the hospitality of "Palm Grove," the selection of Mr. G. H. Jaques, 4 miles further up the Ourimbah, and the last dwelling on the creek. Here the ranges converge, and, except for a clearing here and there near the stream, and tracks of timber-getters, the scrub is in its virgin state. Along the creek, by shaded pools, are many trees strange to southern visitors, and ornamental wattles, notably *Acacia elata*, *A. prominens*, and *A. pruinosa*, the two former being better known in cultivation. The mimosa-like foliage of the last-mentioned is seen in the plate, "Scene on Ourimbah Creek" (right-hand bottom corner). Palms of two species grace the scene, and fine ferns in variety flourish, clumps of stag-horn and bird-nest ferns on trees lending tropical significance. In some of the open patches are brakes of wild raspberries, displaying at the same time crops of white flowers and ripe, red fruit; upon the latter, *Zosterops*, red-coated "Blood" Honey-eaters, Cat-Birds, Regent-Birds, &c., feed. The numerous gullies that run into the ranges

are interesting, being the home of Lyre-Birds, Ground-Thrushes (*Geocichla*), &c. As at the camp below, so at "Palm Grove" the calm, crisp mornings are ushered in with a perfect babel of sweet bird-voices, the singing being incessant for about two hours after dawn. There are warblings of *Zosterops* and Fantails (three kinds); trills of Blue Wrens; the sweet songs of Thickheads—the Rufous and the Yellow-breasted; the louder but dulcet music of Butcher-Birds and the "harmonic" notes of Shrike-Thrushes, punctuated with cracks of the Coachwhip-Bird. Notes of Honey-eaters can be detected—the merry Yellow-eared (Lewin) and the equally merry Yellow-faced (*chrysops*), besides many other bird-calls, while a Wonga-Wonga Pigeon keeps up its high-pitched, continuous "Coo, coo, coo" from a distance.

The Ourimbah Ranges are famous for their tall timber. Turpentine-trees and eucalypts vie with each other in straightness and height, often for 200 feet, frequently more. Should there be a lofty hollow limb or spout, there is where the Roller or Dollar-Bird deposits its pearly set of eggs. These birds are noisy about twilight, preying on flying insects. The ranges have supplied piles for many places in the Commonwealth, and prime poles for telegraph lines may be had for the cutting. To see these ranges, and the difficulties to contend with, one cannot help admiring the endurance and resourcefulness of the plucky timber-getters. Every log won from these mountain fastnesses is at the risk of human life and limb.

Among the many interesting excursions hereabouts is one to what is locally known as the "Waterfalls," where faces of sandstone have been used as grindstones by defunct aborigines, who have left numerous grooves and furrows on the rocks in sharpening their primitive tools. A thin sheet of water flowing over the rocks facilitated the process.

You make southward out of the Ourimbah valley near Jaques', up a long spur of gradual ascent, where the forest is more open, and pretty sylvan glimpses are obtained; now and again is a more extensive view of "far folded hills," modelled in smoky haze, each receding form more thickly veiled till the distant blends with the cloud-line.

A family of Rock-Warblers (*Origma*) is observed, and white flannel-flowers are seen in acres throughout the forest avenues. When the summit of the ridge is gained different vegetation (and consequently birds) is noted—shorter timber and scrub: banksias, hakeas, and acacias—of the last notably *linearis*, *myrtifolia*, and *suaveolens*, all in ripe seed. A soak on the summit is rank with reeds and rushes, giant mountain moss (*Lycopodium*), &c., and is the home of several pairs of Emu-Wrens. A creek runs through the soak and over the aboriginal-scored rocks before mentioned, and descends into a snug and picturesque valley below. On top is an ideal place to boil the billy for a mid-day meal and revel in the surrounding scenery; or the party may descend into another gully-head near, where the gathered waters of a stream leap down

a hundred feet or more, and with their spray water four or five acres of ferns, chiefly handsome todeas. This desirable picnic spot is also easily approached by a detour from the Ourimbah Creek road instead of laboriously climbing over the hills.

Still at the edge of the soak, and looking southward across the saddles of forested hills, in fancy could be descried those hills about the Mooni valley where the pastoral poet, Henry Kendall, was reared and wrote the verses "From Mooni," one of which reads :—

"Yea, for him by Mooni's marge
Sings the yellow-haired September,
With the face the gods remember
When the ridge is burnt to ember
And the dumb sea chains the barge!
When the mount like molten brass is,
Down beneath fern-feathered passes
Noonday dew in cool green grasses
Gleams on him by Mooni's marge."

This verse is applicable to Ourimbah also, even to the ridge being "burnt to ember." From our quarters at night could be seen the illuminations of forest fires high up on the ridge.

The Mooni valley also inspired Kendall's verses, "Bell-Birds."

"The silver-voiced Bell-Birds, the darlings of day-time."

were likewise heard on the Ourimbah near the lower (No. 1) camp.

During the ten days' stay in the Ourimbah valley between 60 and 70 species of birds were recorded, of which may be mentioned :—Sanguineous Honey-eater (*Myzomela sanguinolenta*), Friar-Bird (*Philemon corniculatus*), Caterpillar-eater (*Edoliisoma tenuirostre*), Rufous Fantail (*Rhipidura rufifrons*), Brown Fly-eater (*Pseudogerygone fusca*), Cat-Bird (*Ælurædus viridis*), Regent-Bird (*Sericulus melinus*), Spectacled Flycatcher (*Piezorhynchus gouldi*), Lyre-Bird (*Menura superba*), Wonga Pigeon (*Leucosarcia picata*), Little Green-Pigeon (*Chalcophaps chrysochlora*), Dollar-Bird (*Eurystomus australis*), Emu-Wren (*Stipiturus malachurus*), Variegated Wren (*Malurus lamberti*), Rock-Warbler (*Origma rubricata*), Yellow-throated Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis citreogularis*).

It was expected that more Pigeons would be seen. Wongas were reported plentiful up to 6 or 7 years ago, when they sometimes frequented the selections and fed with the poultry. Their disappearance is, of course, attributed to the gun. Another fine bird, the Topknot-Pigeon (*Lopholæmus antarcticus*) has gone down before the pot-hunter. What a pity the New South Wales game authorities did not enforce their laws before it was too late! Now they have gone to opposite extremes, refusing an application from the president of the R.A.O.U. to procure a few bird-skins for a State museum!

Regarding the Topknot-Pigeon, at one time abundant on the Ourimbah Ranges, Mr. G. H. Jaques, a pioneer selector, states :—

"When I came to the Ourimbah, in 1882, and up to about 10 years ago, Topknot-Pigeons (or Flock-Pigeons, as we call them

locally) flew by hundreds (anything from 500 to 1,000) in a flock, flock following flock about every few minutes for two hours (8 to 10, about) in the morning, the birds always making down the valley—*i.e.*, easterly.

"I never noticed them going up, for the reason, probably, that they took another valley or made back across the hills. During their passage down the valley they frequently crowded on one of the taller trees. Another flock following would alight too on the same tree, often causing boughs to break off with the unwanted weight of birds.

"Every four hours the Pigeons left the tall timber to feed in the lower trees or scrub on the berries or fruit (usually ripe during winter months) of the black pine, teak, lilly-pilly, bangalow and cabbage palms, &c., taking their food mostly on the wing when fluttering about the fruit. When these fruits are cropped the Pigeons depart for fresh fields. In late seasons they would remain to nest among the tall trees on the ridges.

"These Pigeons have a curious method of 'roosting' on the mountains or hills, not perching like most Pigeons, but reclining on outstretched wings upon the thickly-foliaged or matted tree-tops, such as *Banksia*, scrub-apple, &c.

"Few birds are seen now. Some of the settlers used to shoot great numbers and pickle them in casks. Sometimes seven to eleven birds came down at a single shot. The flesh is very dark in colour, nevertheless sweet and nutritious."

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALASIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS' UNION.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—Your Council have much pleasure in presenting to you the eleventh annual report of the proceedings of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union for the past year. It is a matter for congratulation that the business of the Union is expanding. This expansion has necessitated monthly meetings of the Council, to enable them to cope with the extra volume of work. The members composing the Council have taken great interest in the Union's affairs, and have regularly attended the monthly meetings. The membership roll of the Union has increased considerably, whilst the list of resignations of members, when compared with the increase, is small. The addition to the number of members of the Council and the election of local State secretaries has had a beneficial influence, and has resulted in an increased interest being evinced in the aims and objects for which the Union was founded. The issue of a Royal charter to the Society is regarded as an important event.

Since last annual meeting the Council have been concerned particularly with the issue of *The Emu* journal, and have changed the style of some of the type, with satisfactory results. It was also resolved to increase the issue of each part of *The Emu* to 500 copies.

The setting aside of reservations and sanctuaries for birds has

also engaged their attention, with the result that numerous additions have been made to the list of areas set aside in the different States for the protection of our bird-life. It is satisfactory to know that one of the main breeding habitats of Pelicans, as well as the haunts of several species of sea-birds, have been now reserved.

Encouraged by the Council and others, certain members of the R.A.O.U. have added further successes to the efforts of the Union by research work and in the investigation of Australasian avifauna.

During the year our knowledge has been increased by several additions to the list of birds new to science, whilst members of the Union have enriched us by the publication of several works dealing with the classification and the nidification of birds frequenting the Commonwealth. These works have been exceedingly useful to students, and have supplied a long-felt want.

The Council have been especially active with regard to the traffic in birds, their eggs and plumes, and bird-lovers owe a deep debt of gratitude to the Hon. F. Tudor, Minister of Trade and Customs, and Mr. N. Lockyer, Comptroller-General of Trade and Customs, for the whole-hearted manner in which they have responded to the wishes of members of the Union by prohibiting by proclamation the importation and exportation of many species of birds and their plumage, as advocated in a deputation by the Council. The Minister of Trade and Customs of the Commonwealth was fortified in his commendable action in issuing the proclamations by the action of the Council of the Chamber of Commerce, which body, convinced by the report of one of the members of the Union, decided that the trade in birds' plumage was a pernicious one, since the value of a live bird was infinitely greater to the community than would be the profit accruing from the sale of their feathers. This broad-minded interpretation by the Chamber of Commerce, and their conception of the value of our birds to the Commonwealth, is profoundly gratifying.

Our unqualified thanks are again due to the Hon. F. Tudor for prohibiting the importation of ferrets and weasels, which some persons desired to liberate in large numbers to check the rabbit pest. Members of the Union in New Zealand reported that these creatures when liberated there first destroyed birds and their eggs before they attempted to attack rabbits.

The Check-list Committee have been busily engaged in preparing a report, and it is confidently hoped that a progress report regarding this much-needed work of reference will be submitted to you during this session.

In the interests of working ornithologists, Bulletins to *The Emu* have been issued to safeguard the results of their researches and guarantee to them the right of priority.

The Council would be grateful to any of the members who would give them definite and detailed proof regarding the alleged wholesale poisoning of our native birds, either designedly or by

accident, so that steps can be taken to remedy this condition of affairs.

During the year the Council sustained three regrettable losses from their ranks—firstly, by the resignation of the hon. secretary through ill-health; secondly, by the resignation of the acting hon. secretary, due to pressure of business; and thirdly, the hon. treasurer on account of a similar cause. The Council were, however, fortunate in being able on each occasion to fill the vacancy.

The Emu still maintains, and even surpasses, its high standard of literary, scientific, and artistic excellence. One coloured plate of a new and unfigured bird has been given to members, as well as a special part of *The Emu*. Further donations to the Coloured Figure Fund would be welcome.

The Department of External Affairs, which exercises control over British Papua, has displayed considerable vigilance in the prevention of the destruction of Birds-of-Paradise, and has informed the Council from time to time of its actions regarding the preservation of the wild birds of British New Guinea. Under the existing law of the territory special permits may be issued to the duly accredited agents of any scientific society or institution to collect or destroy Birds-of-Paradise for scientific purposes. Representations were made to the Department that all the species of Birds-of-Paradise known to inhabit Papua have already been studied, so no specimens were now necessary for scientific purposes, and the reason for the special permits disappears. The Council of the Union was of opinion that permits might still be issued under stringent conditions, and for *personal* use only of *bona-fide* collectors for scientific institutions, and not for the use of agents, black or white, far and near, of such collectors.

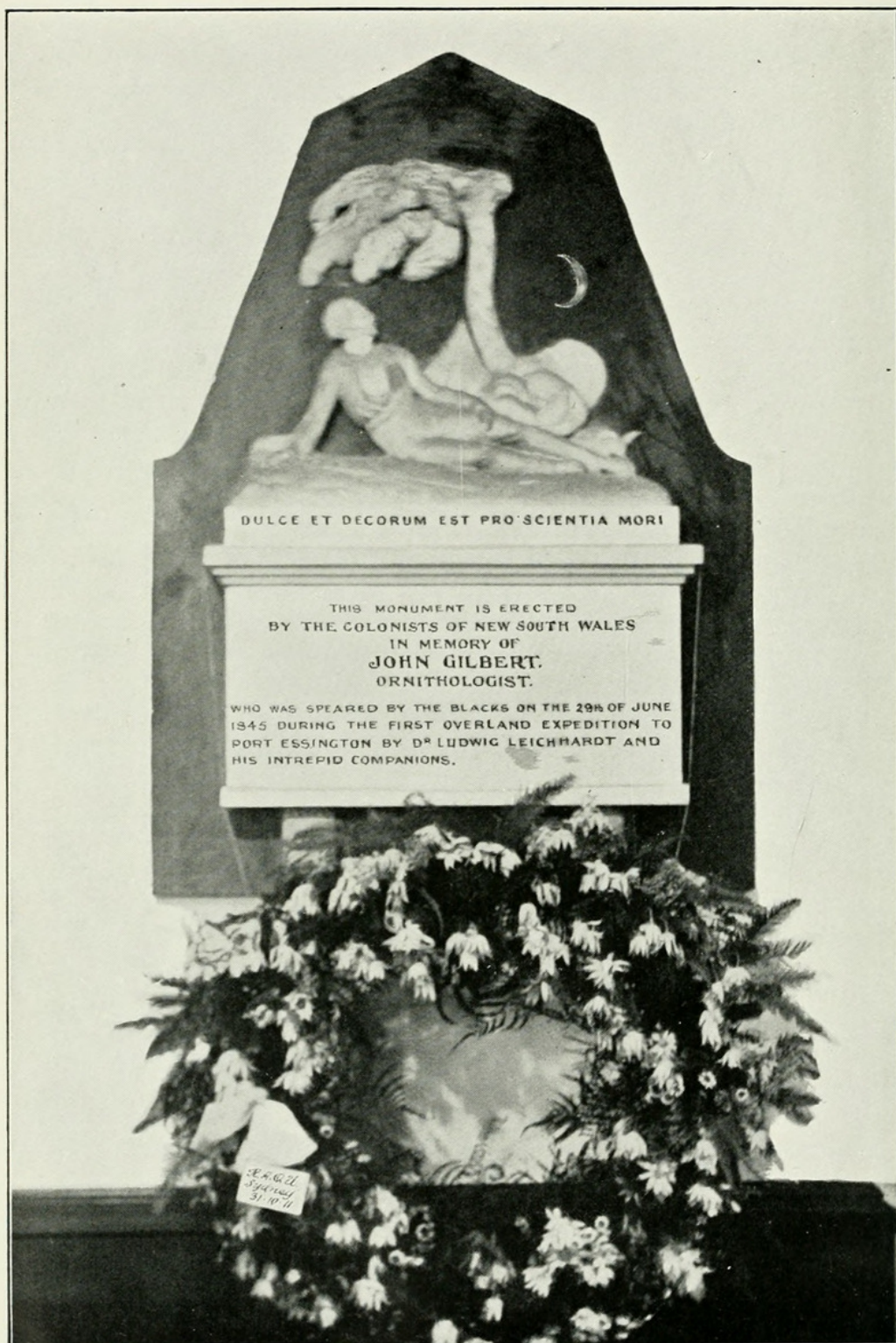
The thanks of the Union are again due to Dr. Charles Ryan for the gratuitous use of his rooms for the meetings of the Council, and to the Zoological and Acclimatization Society of Victoria for shelving the library of the Union.

A. H. E. MATTINGLEY,
Acting Hon. Secretary.

PROGRESS REPORT OF THE CHECK-LIST COMMITTEE OF THE
R.A.O.U. REGARDING AN AUSTRALIAN LIST OF BIRDS.

At the Hobart session (1903) a committee was appointed to deal with a Check-list of Australian birds, Mr. Robert Hall, convener. At the Adelaide session (1908) the committee, which had practically done nothing (for the reason that the time for issuing such a list was not ripe) was remodelled, with Mr. A. J. Campbell as convener. It now stands—Colonel W. V. Legge (Tasmania), Mr. Basset Hull (New South Wales), Mr. A. J. Campbell (Victoria), Mr. J. W. Mellor (South Australia), Mr. A. W. Milligan (Western Australia), Mr. Robt. Hall (Queensland), and Mr. Gregory M. Mathews (England).

The convener made a commencement by taking as a working basis the list of Australian birds compiled by Mr. Mathews and



Gilbert Memorial Tablet, St. James' Church, Sydney.

published as a supplement to *The Emu*, vol. vii. (January, 1908), this list being founded on the British Museum "Catalogue of Birds" and the "List of Vernacular Names for Australian Birds" adopted by the Australasian Science Association, 1898. These lists were forwarded to members of committee with a covering circular letter.

Messrs. Hall, Legge, and Mellor returned their lists, each making certain suggestions, while Mr. Mathews was good enough to indicate, for the information of the committee, the whole of the alterations he proposed to make, which he considered necessary in accordance with the *strict law of priority*, as laid down in the "International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature."

During the winter months the convener and Mr. Milligan had many meetings in Melbourne, and reduced the lists to doubtful species or species (for the want of references or specimens) not examined.

On the eve of the Sydney Session two more meetings were held, at which Col. Legge and Mr. Mellor conferred, and the number of doubtful species was further reduced.

Finally, the four gentlemen named, with the addition of Mr. Basset Hull, met in committee three days at the Australian Museum, through the courtesy of the Curator, Mr. Robt. Etheridge.

It was resolved that the validity of species only could be attempted with the time allotted for this Session, leaving the nomenclature (including vernaculars) for some future occasion, and so far over 500 species (or kinds) have been agreed upon.

The special thanks of your committee are due to Mr. Etheridge and his staff, who kindly placed a room and the whole of the valuable bird collections of the Australian Museum at the disposal of your Committee for examination.

Thanks are also due to the following persons and institutions for the loan of important material, viz. :—Mr. Robt. Hall (Museum, Hobart), Mr. Bernard Woodward (Museum, Perth), Dr. Hamlyn Harris (Museum, Brisbane), Mr. H. L. White (Belltrees, New South Wales), and Mr. A. G. Campbell (Pomonal, Victoria).

A. J. CAMPBELL (Convener).

ALEX. WM. MILLIGAN.

A. F. BASSET HULL.

W. V. LEGGE.

J. W. MELLOR.

Sydney, 31/10/11.

MEMORIAL SERVICE TO JOHN GILBERT.

ON Tuesday, the 31st October, 1911, the members of the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union attended a memorial service at St. James' Church, King-street, and placed a wreath of native flowers on the tablet erected to the memory of Gilbert. This church, one of the oldest in Sydney, bears an inscription to the effect that in the year 1820 it was "opened for public worship by

J. Macquarie, Esq., Governor." The walls inside are covered with inscriptions and mural tablets dedicated to the memory of the early explorers and pioneers of Australia—Bass, Flinders, Wentworth, Blaxland, and many others being amongst the number. The memorial tablet to John Gilbert is surmounted by a small marble relief depicting a figure resting under a palm with a tent in the background. (For inscription see Plate XV.) The wreath was hung by Mr. J. W. Mellor (President), assisted by Mr. A. J. Campbell (ex-President). It was composed of the following Australian flowers:—Waratah, flannel-flower, bottle-brush (red), Christmas bells, hakea, grevillea, callistemon, melaleuca, bridal-bush, leptospermum, orchids, and ferns.

During the service the rector of St. James' (Rev. W. F. Wentworth Shields, M.A.) referred to a letter written by Gilbert to Dr. George Bennett stating with what great pleasure he (Gilbert) was looking forward to the expedition. The rector also, in a few eloquent sentences, referred to Gilbert's devotion to ornithological science, and said he was not at all surprised that ornithologists in Session in the city should prompt such a befitting memorial service. At the close of the service the Lord's Prayer was repeated, the rector pronounced the benediction, and all remained standing for a while in silent tribute to the memory of John Gilbert.

Little is known about Gilbert. He was apparently a taxidermist in the employment of Gould, who sent him as collector to Western Australia in 1840. He returned to England with his collection the following year, and shortly again visited Western Australia, and afterwards Northern Australia, where he met his tragic death by the hands of treacherous natives, 28th June, 1845.

An account of this tragic occurrence is furnished in Mr. A. J. Campbell's "Nests and Eggs of Australian Birds," p. 330, under the heading of the "Black-backed Tree Creeper (*Climacteris melanota*)," which bird poor Gilbert procured on the day of his lamented death. Interesting side-lights on Gilbert's personality are also given in Mr. Campbell's book—Introduction, p. x., while the "Records of the Australian Museum, vol. vi., p. 125, have other interesting references to good Gilbert.

[There is a discrepancy about the exact date of Gilbert's death—the tablet shows 29th June, whereas Gould states the 28th June. Reference to Leichhardt's *Journal* (1847), p. 309, shows the latter date to be correct.]

VISIT TO THE MITCHELL LIBRARY.

The importance of this library for early Australian ornithological works demanded a special visit during the Sydney Session of the R.A.O.U. But it was not till after its close that a few inter-State members, including the President (Mr. J. W. Mellor), and led by Mr. G. J. Broinowski, the veteran author and bird-painter, were kindly received by the librarian in charge (Mr. Wright).

The original drawings, bound in volumes, of the late Sylvester Diggles (Queensland) were greatly admired, some probably being

amongst the best bird pictures ever executed. The more the sorrow that the talented artist was not spared to complete his work. There were also seven other volumes, royal quarto size, fitted into a special case, that interested members much. They were each indexed (name of species in manuscript), and contained manuscript references and field notes, sketches, pencilled and coloured, of birds. These have been, by the authorities of the library, attributed to the great Gould. But they were more likely to be Diggles's proposed work in embryo, especially as under the heading of the Coachwhip-Bird (*Psophodes crepitans*) was a hitherto unfigured, coloured nest and eggs of that bird above the inscription "S. D., Oct. 27, 1863." It is important that the identification of these books be thoroughly established.

Bush-Birds of New Zealand.

By J. C. M'LEAN, M.B.O.U., GISBORNE, N.Z.

PART III.

Rhipidura flabellifera—PIED FANTAIL.

Buller, "Birds of New Zealand" (2nd edition), vol. i., p. 69.

THE Pied Fantail, though not often met with away in the main bush, was fairly plentiful on its edges, and in the valleys of the older country was common where an odd tree or patch of scrub gave shelter. Usually a pair appeared and took up its abode in the small clearing around each camp, and remained in the vicinity until the end. In the heavy bush its chief resorts were in the creek bottoms and other open, sunny parts, and there they were very tame, but not inquisitive, generally flying to meet the passer-by and settling close at hand. Following its insect food, which consists of the smaller moths and midges—taken on the wing—the Fantail performs its aerial evolutions, on sunny days, high above the tree-tops, pausing in its erratic flight to settle and sing its squeaky, twittered song from some outstanding twig; but on damp and duller days it finds its food much lower down, and—almost a silent bird—hunts within a few feet of the ground, often amid the ferns themselves.

Fantails pair for life, and with this species quarrels, so common in the spring among some other birds, are practically unknown. Each pair keeps more or less about its own particular locality; they are much attached to each other, and, individually, to their home. Though not sociably inclined towards others of their species, the two do not resent the intrusion of others of their kind, and it is not unusual to see more than one pair busy about the same tree. They have been observed, however, with persistent sallies, to frighten the Pied Tit from their home. The song is much more noticeable in the spring, and at nesting-time the birds become quite noisy in their little way. Long after dusk the plaintive



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FROM A PHOTO. BY T. GRICE CAMPBELL.



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