

still persisting. The northern invasions are not easily traceable, but we cannot dogmatize by stating that they were through New Caledonia or Norfolk Island, and it is possible that a way existed of which we have no trace. It is possible that some of the earlier invasions took place simultaneously with an Australian invasion, which would account for some of the peculiarities, but we do not think that any direct colonization of New Zealand from Australia has taken place except in the undoubted case of *Zosterops*; consequently there can be no comparison of the Neozelanic avifauna with that of Tasmania, as the latter simply shows, with scarcely an intrusive element, the northern forms which travelled down Australia from the north before the separation of Tasmania from the mainland. It is also admitted that Tasmania may have been connected with Antarctica even as New Zealand was, but this connection was at a later date, when most of the peculiar forms had been dissipated. The Tasmanian endemic genus *Tribonyx* is only an island form of *Microtribonyx*, of larger bulk and less flight. Much confusion has been caused through the misunderstanding by palæontologists of the convergence in flightlessness in the Ralline birds, but when Andrews described a fossil *Tribonyx* from Madagascar he drew attention to this fact, pointing out that there was little reason to suggest that this was really a *Tribonyx*.

We might note that in *The Ibis* for 1913 we published a reference-list of the birds of New Zealand, which contains much of interest, a majority of the points in Hall's paper (1920) being discussed in that place seven years before.

A New *Menura*: Prince Edward's Lyre-Bird.

BY A. H. CHISHOLM, R.A.O.U., BRISBANE.

INASMUCH as the Australian Lyre-tails are among the most remarkable and fascinating of the world's birds, and by reason of the fact that their habitat and range are restricted, importance attaches to the discovery of any variant from the type, and even to the recording of any extension of locality. The type-bird of the genus, *Menura superba* (Davies), ranks as one of the earliest of important "finds" in Australian ornithology; a markedly different species, *M. alberti*, was named by John Gould in 1850; and a third species, *M. victoriae*, was separated from the type species by the same great ornithologist in 1862.

Nearly 60 years having elapsed since the latter date (and over 100 years since the discovery of the type species), it is somewhat extraordinary that it is now possible to put forward, with a considerable degree of confidence, what is apparently a better variant from the type of the genus than is Gould's *victoriae*. Moreover, it has to be said at once that the new bird hails from Queensland—a State which was previously supposed to harbour

only the Albert Lyre-Bird; that the class of country which it inhabits is totally different from that favoured by other species of the genus; and that the type-locality is on the *western* watershed of the Great Dividing Range.

Early in 1919 I had a note relating to this subject from a lad who lives at Lyra, a small township on the Sydney to Brisbane railway line, and not far from the border of New South Wales. In this letter it was remarked that Lyre-Birds were once abundant in the locality, that some were still to be seen and heard, and that the township itself had taken its name from the birds. While not overlooking the fact that Shaw had used the specific title *lyra* for the *M. superba*, it seemed to me hardly possible that any member of this restricted genus should be found 100 miles inland, and particularly in a locality carrying none of the jungle vegetation so beloved of Lyre-Birds generally. Confirmation came later in the year, however, when Dr. Spencer Roberts, R.A.O.U., wrote me regarding the Lyre-Birds of the contiguous district of Stanthorpe. He related that the birds dwelt upon the lonely granite-strewn hills of the locality, and that their nests were usually placed in the clefts of giant boulders.

This was an invitation in itself. Accordingly, in the following month (August), following the departure of the Royal train, I took advantage of the occasion to drop off at Stanthorpe—which town, by the way, is 198 miles by rail from Brisbane and 25 miles by rail from the border of New South Wales. Three interesting days among the birds of the locality were distinguished by close acquaintance with the Lyre-Birds. We examined seven nests in one afternoon, including two which each contained an egg; and in one case a female bird was flushed from the nest. In every instance the nest was built on the side or sloping top of a huge boulder, *in perfectly open forest country*.

We did not see a male bird at any time, nor had we any desire to secure one in the breeding season. Early in the present year, however, I asked Dr. Roberts to take a specimen, at the same time furnishing him with a special permit from the Queensland Government. Dr. Roberts responded promptly, though, as a sound bird-lover, the work "nearly broke his heart." The specimen was examined in Brisbane, after which it was sent on to Mr. A. J. Campbell for critical comparison with skins in the "H. L. White Collection" in the Melbourne Museum. To this national collection it was subsequently donated.

Gould admitted that the grounds upon which he separated *M. victoriae* from the type-bird were slender; nevertheless, he allowed the species to stand, and it has held good as a variety to this day. In the latest variant, as earlier suggested, the case for separation is stronger. Nor do I think that additional material (from such a "novel" locality) will tend to disprove this view. The upper surface is fuscous, as against brownish (bay brown) in the type of the genus and auburn in *M. victoriae*. The under surface is mouse-grey, compared with light fuscous (hair brown) in both

superba and *victoriæ*. The colour of the two large tail feathers is tawny or russet, as against hazel in the type-bird and chestnut in *victoriæ*—i.e., the new bird is of a lighter colour than the type, while the Victorian bird is darker. Total length, 35 inches; wing, 11½ inches; bill, 1½ inches; tarsus, 5 inches. These figures are slightly larger than those of the typical *superba*.

Further material must be obtained before the precise relation of this bird to the type species can be definitely established. Provisionally, I suggest for this "Queensland *superba*" the name of *Menura edwardi*, in honour of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. The use of proper names for birds can be overdone; but in this case the precedents are extraordinary. The names of the Prince's great grandparents were used in respect of two of the three previous species of these "royal" Australian birds; and what more fitting than that to Queen Victoria's * and Prince Albert's Lyre-Birds should be added Prince Edward's Lyre-Bird? † Moreover, it was on the fringe of the type locality (i.e., at the Amiens soldiers' settlement) that our persuasive ambassador-Prince first disembarked in Queensland; it was in the same locality that he took his farewell of the State; and it was his tour that indirectly led to the obtaining of the bird.

How far the Lyre-Bird of the rock country extends (into New South Wales and Queensland respectively) cannot at present be stated. Stanthorpe itself, though almost exactly 100 miles in a direct line from the coast, is very little to the north of the Richmond River country—previously supposed to be the most northerly record for the *superba* group of Lyre-tails. It may be that there is a link somewhere. Indeed, I am beginning to suspect that *M. alberti* is not the only species of *Menura* in the Macpherson and other coastal ranges of Southern Queensland; we have, I think, been inclined to take too much for granted on this point. Should connection be established, the semi-anomalous bird of the granite belt will probably take sub-specific rank as *M. superba edwardi*.

THE strike having been settled, the monthly conversazione of the R.A.O.U. will be held on the first Wednesday of each month, at 8 p.m. 4th May, R.A.O.U. Room, "Gully Birds," Mr. T. Tregellas; 1st June, National Museum, "Recent Additions to the 'H. L. White Collection,'" Mr. A. J. Campbell, and "Tree-creepers," Mr. F. Howe; 6th July, R.A.O.U. Room, "Nests of Birds," Mr. J. A. Ross.

* A general impression has gained ground that the name *victoriæ* implies the locality of the species. Gould made his object impulse clear, however, when he wrote, *apropos* of this bird:—"It will be seen that I consider the *Menura* from this part of the country to be different from the bird inhabiting New South Wales, and that, under this impression, I have named it *M. victoriæ* in honour of our gracious Sovereign."

† A capital suggestion, especially in these days when so much disloyalty is in the air. Moreover, the royal parents of Prince Edward are the co-patrons of the R.A.O.U., and have taken an especial interest in the Union since its inception 20 years ago.—Eds.



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