

A Spring Excursion into South-Western Queensland.

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A favourable season as a result of late autumn and early winter rains and a desire to become better acquainted with the distribution of bird and plant life in that part of South-western Queensland between the Warrego and Wilson Rivers were sufficient inducements for Dr. A. Chenery and myself to arrange a month's holiday in that direction. Mr. P. D. Riddell, principal of the local Technical College, who is keenly interested in out-of-door life, accompanied us as chief photographer, and Norman Read was in charge of our means of transport, a motor trolley, which held all our impedimenta and enough petrol to take us to the nearest railhead at Cunnamulla.

A start was made along the northern road from Broken Hill on the morning of August 15th, 1923. Nine miles out Stephens Creek was crossed, a little above the reservoir which was Broken Hill's main water supply during its earlier years. The creek was sandy-bedded, bordered mainly with red-gums, and, as was to be expected in a country the rainfall of which for the last 40 years averaged 9.5 inches, it ran only at uncertain intervals, and then for one or two days at a time. The same may be said of all the other creeks in the Western Darling country. At 19 miles we crossed Yalcowinna Creek, which arched away to our right, and at the same time we came to the grand unconformity of geologists separating the archeozoic rocks of the Broken Hill series from the Torrowangee series, of slightly lesser age. Here we passed over an elevated tract of gravelly country until we reached Campbell's Creek, which we skirted for a few miles. A few Galahs (*Cacatua roseicapilla*), Bare-eyed Cockatoos (*C. sanguinea*), and Ring-necks (*Barnardius barnardi*) were paired and nesting in the red-gums of this creek, but there was a general scarcity of bird life, as last year's severe drought and an earlier and better rainfall further north had prevented the return of those whose movements were regulated by food-supply.

The growth of herbage had been delayed also by a winter of more than ordinary severity, and only the earlier flowering plants were noted. *Blennodia lasiocarpa*, one of the earliest, made the hillsides and slopes in many places look as though covered with snow. *Blennodia trisecta*, of more erect growth, occurred in patches; the yellow of *Blennodia nasturtioides* and the blue of *Erodium cymnorum* varied the colour scheme.

At about forty miles we commenced to wend our way through the Euriowie Hills—outliers of the Barrier Range. Here the brilliant yellow composite *Helipterum polygalifolium* was in places well in flower. Mulga (*Acacia aneura*) and Dead Finish

(*A. tetragonophylla*) clothed the hillsides, the latter flowering freely. Leaving these hills the road opened out and ran over undulating country to the right of the Barrier Range till we reached Fowler's Gap, where we halted for lunch, and noted nesting Galahs and a few Bare-eyed Cockatoos along the creek. Crossing the creek we were soon away from the main range, and for the next eight miles we made our way over ironstone-gravel country with a fair covering of herbage, amongst which were many flowering plants. Several Australian Dotterels (*Peltohyas australis*), a few pairs of Orange Chats (*Epthianura aurifrons*), and the Pipit (*Anthus australis*) were flushed. When we reached Sandy Creek bore, the country changed, and became more sandy with a scanty covering of herbage and occasional stunted Mulgas and Hakeas (*H. leucoptera*). The big white and yellow composite (*Myriocephalus stuarti*) was only coming into bud. We soon reached Bancannia Lake, which was full for the first time for many years, and presented a fine sight. We were here directed to turn off at a dead horse eight miles farther on, where we left the northern road and took a north-easterly one. We found that caterpillars were numerous, and that much of the herbage, especially the New Zealand spinach, was eaten to bare stalks. When half-way to Nundora we flushed numbers of Whistling Eagles (*Haliastur sphenurus*) from the ground, with a few Black Kites (*Milvus migrans*). Birds of both species were busily engaged feeding on the caterpillars, which were of all sizes, from those just hatched to mature ones burrowing into the ground to pupate. The flowering herbage was also attended by a small brown moth in great numbers.

Bare-eyed Cockatoos and Galahs were becoming more numerous on the creeks. Soon after leaving Nundora Station we came to a gate, in one of the posts of which a pair of Galahs had their nesting hollow. Wonnaminta Station was reached about an hour after dark when we were cordially welcomed by Mr. and Mrs. Aubrey Jackson. Next morning we looked round the homestead, and noted the fine growth of young red-gums around the dams and along the creek to take the place of the old trees which were cut out years before to feed the engine of a wool-scouring plant. Numbers of Fairy Martins (*Hylochelidon ariel*) were busily constructing their spouted mud nests under verandahs and sheds. The arrival of a Goshawk sent the lot high into the air, where they remained till the unwelcome visitor had taken his departure. We were shown the site of the nest of a Greenie (*Meliphaga penicillata*) in a vine on one of the verandahs. The plaster had fallen from part of the pisa wall of the house, and a pair of Red-backed Kingfishers (*Halcyon pyrrhopygius*) had burrowed into the wall and reared a family the previous year. Striated Pardalotes had also made use of this wall for the same purpose. Advance parties of the migratory Wood Swallows (*Artamus superciliosus* and *A. personatus*) were

passing high overhead or halting to feed and rest before going further south.

On leaving Wonnaminta our road took us over gravelly country crossing the eastern end of the isolated Koonenberry Range, where it had weathered away to a small ridge. The surrounding country bore a picturesque appearance. Bare white quartz patches and a vivid green herbage alternated with areas made white with *Blennodia lasiocarpa*, or yellow with *B. nasturtioides*, and the composite *Helipterum polygalifolium*. We pulled up within two miles of the range as we intended to make an examination of its bird and plant life. To reach it we traversed a gravelly plain with many shallow depressions—"crab-holes"—in which vegetation was particularly luxuriant, *Helipterum strictum* and *Senecio brachyglossus* forming the greater part of the crab-hole vegetation. We disturbed a White-fronted Chat (*Epthianura albifrons*) from her nest low down in a perennial saltbush. She fluttered away to lead us from the nest, which contained three hard-set eggs. Our next find was a nest of the Orange Chat (*E. aurifrons*), from which the female flushed. The nest held three of the Chat's eggs and one egg of the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo (*Chalcites basalis*). The Cuckoo deserved credit for finding a nest so well concealed in a big open plain.

On Koonenberry itself we saw very few birds other than Red-capped Robins (*Petroica goodenovii*), Chestnut-eared Finches (*Taeniopygia castanotis*) and a small flock of Black-capped Tree-runners (*Neositta pileata*). Dr. Chenery found a nest of the Wedgebill (*Sphenostoma cristata*) containing a pair of half-fledged young in a Dead-finish and a Singing Honeyeater's nest unusually placed low down in a *Kochia* bush. A gum creek crossing through a gap at the end of the range was frequented by Bare-eyed Cockatoos, Galahs, Ravens, Yellow-throated Miners, Greenies and Pardalotes.

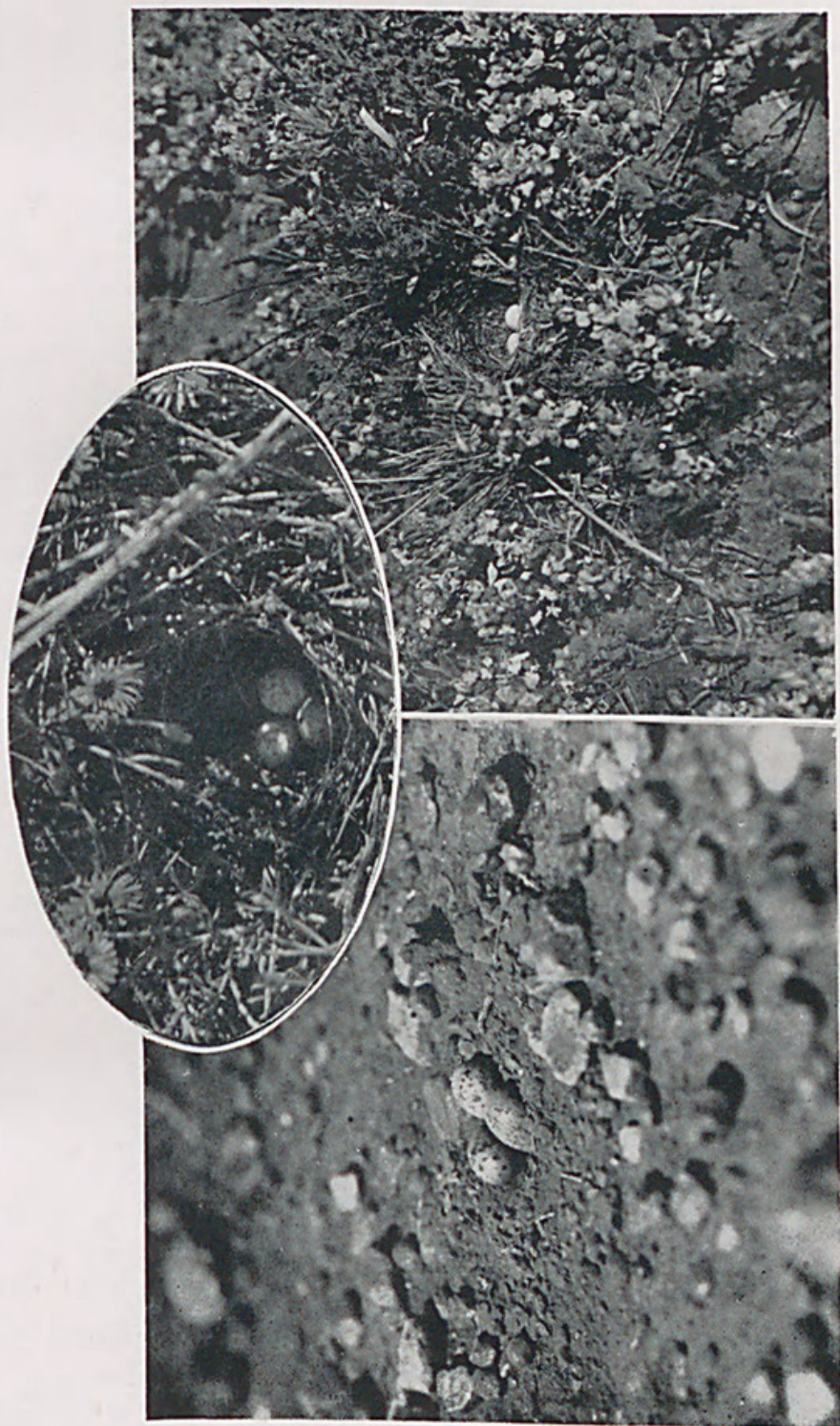
About two miles from Koonenberry and three from Morden Station, we had to spend three days to await a new magneto for our trolley. A pair of Black-backed Magpies (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), two pairs of Yellow-throated Miners (*Myzantha flavigula*), and a Crested Pigeon (*Ocyphaps lophotes*) had nests containing young within a stone's throw of our camp. Dr. Chenery, while wandering down the creek, found Black (*Myzomela nigra*) and Pied (*Lichnotentha picata*) Honeyeaters feeding on the nectar-bearing flowers of the tobacco bushes (*Nicotiana glauca*), in company with Spiny-cheeked (*Acanthagenys rufogularis*), Singing (*Meliphaga virescens*) and White-plumed Honeyeaters (Greenies).

About a mile and a half from our camp along the White Cliffs Road we discovered a flat with a good deal of *Acacia cana* growing upon it. We explored this, and found a part where there was a thick under-brush of *Eremophila maculata*, all in flower,

and showing much variation in colour. The flowers were honey-laden, and had attracted a number of honey-eating birds, and as they have a long flowering period, the birds were nesting, or preparing to do so. Pied (*Certhionyx variegatus*), Black (*Myzomela nigra*), White-fronted (*Glyciphila albifrons*), White-plumed, Spiny-cheeked and Singing Honeyeaters were seen and heard on all sides. The White-fronted had nests in course of construction, some containing fresh eggs, and others young birds in all stages from recently hatched fledglings to fully fledged birds just leaving the nest. The Black Honeyeaters were in pairs, but, being a little too early, we did not find any nests. We later found one nest of the Pied Honeyeater containing two eggs, and on the following day the clutch was completed. This was the only nest of this species found. It was an open cup-shaped structure composed of dried stalks of herbage and rootlets, and was lined with fine rootlets and placed at about one foot from the ground in a dead *Eremophila maculata*, through which was growing *Enchylaena tomentosa* with red berries, and a beautiful white *Brachycome*. The nest measured, in millimetres: outside diameter, 90; inside, 60; outside depth, 47; inside, 35.

The nests of the White-fronted Honeyeater (*Glyciphila albifrons*) were placed, one in an *Acacia cana*, at about three feet from the ground, another in a *Pimelea*, well concealed, at about the same height, and the rest in *Eremophila maculata*, at on an average about one foot from the ground; they were usually well concealed. The open nests were cup-shaped, composed of small stalks of dried herbage and grasses and lined with the down from the seeds of *Senecio gregorii*. In a pair of young a few days old, the skin was leaden-coloured on the feather tracts, lighter on other parts, with ashy-coloured down on head, dorsal, humeral, and femoral tracts; bill pale brown, gape yellow, irides hazel, and legs pale slate. Three nests of the Singing Honeyeater (*Meliphaga virescens*) were found, all containing fresh eggs. One of these in an *Acacia cana* was beautifully constructed almost wholly of sheep's wool. A Spotted Nightjar was flushed from a gully in a stony hill at the back of the camp.

We left camp late on the 19th, and stopped at Morden Station for the night. During the evening Mr. White, the manager, asked me: "Did you ever hear of a bird covering her eggs over?" He then proceeded to relate that about six weeks previously when driving sheep out near Lake Elder Station, his attention was attracted to a small dun-coloured bird which seemed to be brushing the ground with its wings in front of the advancing sheep. On going over she flew away, and he found three eggs on the ground. They were covered with sand and pebbles and other debris, so that only a small portion of one remained visible. The bird from his description was an Australian Dotterel (*Peltodytes australis*). This habit has been noted before, but I have witnessed



Nest and eggs of the Gibber-bird.

Nest and eggs of Australian Dotterel.

Centre: Nest of the Pied Honeyeater.

NATIONAL MUSEUM IN MELBOURNE

it only once, when the eggs were almost wholly covered with sand.

We left Morden late on the following morning. At about six miles out we found a pair of Galahs busily bedding a hollow in a gate-post with green gum leaves. Our way led us over gravelly country covered with flowering composites, with clumps of Whitewood, across sandy ridges on which Mulga was the dominant tree, with Dead-finish, Whitewood, five species of *Eremophila* and that fine Daisy *Myriocephalus Stuarti* well in flower. We arrived at Yancannia Station in time for lunch, and admired a fine scarlet-flowering Gum (*Eucalyptus erythronema*), a showy tree with smooth white stem and gracefully drooping foliage with large scarlet flowers all over it. The leaves are small and lanceolate. It does better than the Western Australian Red-flowering Gum (*E. ficifolia*) in the drier parts of our country. We were anxious to push on, and took to the road which led us through rankly growing herbage around the end of the fine station waterhole—the only permanent natural waterhole west of the Darling in this State. The country we passed over was open and gravelly, replete with wild flowers, and intersected with creeks bordered with Mulga, Belar (*Casuarina*), and Moulie trees (*Owenia acidula*). On sandy ridges there was more scrub and under-bush. Birds, other than Galahs, were not plentiful.

Bootra Station was our next halting-place for a few minutes only to get directions as to the road, which from here ran easterly towards the Paroo. We ran past the woolshed, where preparations were being made to start shearing, passed through fairly thick Mulga and cattle-bush scrub, with an under-scrub of *Eremophila*, and the ground well carpeted with herbage. It was not till the scrub opened out that we saw many birds. Short-billed Crows (*Corvus bennetti*) were nesting in all directions. Wood-Swallows (*Artamus cinereus*, *A. superciliosus*, and *A. personatus*) were numerous, with Rufous Song-Larks, Singing Honeyeaters, Red-capped Robins, Wedgebills and Chestnut-backed Thornbills. We pulled up for a few minutes under a Mulga, from which a Wedgebill flew hurriedly. Investigation revealed a nest containing three eggs in a bunch of Mistletoe (*Loranthus exocarpi*). As the light was failing we camped on a creek timbered with Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populifolia*), remarkable for its glossy, green, aspen-like leaves.

Early next morning a Short-billed Crow, whose nest was in a Mulga near the dam, woke us with his harsh calling. A Rufous Song-Lark sang more pleasantly quite near our camp and not many yards away his mate was flushed from her nest, well hidden amongst the spinach in the bed of the creek. A Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater was tending her nest in a bunch of Mistletoe on a Mulga, and accompanied her early morning task with a varied and melodious song; she is one of the finest vocalists of the bush. A pair of Galahs had been vainly trying to bed a

hollow with green leaves; but, as there was a hole in the bottom, the only result was a considerable heap of leaves on the ground at the foot of the stump. I blocked the hole so that their labours would no longer be in vain. A Crested Bronzewing was sitting on her frail nest in a bunch of Mistletoe.

An early start from this camp on a beautifully fresh sunny morning soon brought us, through Mulga, Whitewood and Bullock-bush, to No. 3 bore, about which we found a flock of 150 Emus feeding on the green herbage. A fine *Eremophila* (*E. Bowmani*), with glaucous foliage and lovely lavender flowers, was much admired by the party. Our road now took us through a scrub of *Acacia ligulata* on sandy ground, with nearly all depressions still holding water. This was succeeded by thick Mulga and Bullock-bush scrub for a long way. Emus were plentiful and mostly in pairs. The herbage had been good all the way, and the many wild flowers coloured the ground yellow, lavender or white, according to the prevalence of different plants. We pulled up at Arosino late in the afternoon, and found that we had only 25 miles more to travel before we should reach the Paroo at Wanaaring. This town consists mostly of empty houses and ruins. The Paroo had lately been in flood, but was then just trickling between a series of lagoons. It was bordered with Red-gums (*Eucalyptus rostrata*), Black Box (*E. bicolor*), Yapunyah (*E. ochrophloia*), and Bimble-box (*E. populifolia*), with the Swamp Acacia (*A. stenophylla*) and Lignum (*Muehlenbeckia cunninghami*). Along the banks around the town was a low scrub of *Dodonaea viscosa* and *Olearia pimeleoides* — the latter gloriously in flower. The Yapunyahs were in blossom, and attracted numbers of honey-eating birds.

We left late on the 22nd August, taking the road which wended its way northwards parallel with the Paroo, through sandy scrub country or across flats subject to inundation from the river. We noted Pied and Black Honeyeaters, Pallid Cuckoos, Red-capped Robins, and Jacky Winters. At forty miles we stopped at Willara Station for lunch. After leaving Willara the road crossed the Paroo, but kept along it till we stopped at Talyalye to effect repairs to our radiator. Whilst our driver was doing this we walked on and noted the following birds: Grey Falcon, Brown Hawk, Whistling Eagle, Short-billed Crows, Galahs, Ringnecks, Blue Bonnets (*Psephotus haematonotus xanthorrhous*), Crested Pigeons, Red-capped Robins, Singing, White-plumed and Black Honeyeaters. Dr. Chenery found in a charred Mulga stump a nest of the Chestnut-backed Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*); it contained three eggs. These birds were common in the scrubs. Several Whitefaces of the common species (*Aphelocephala leucopsis*) were also seen. The car overtook us, and we went on, till towards evening we passed through a natural avenue of Box Trees, then a scrub of Turpentine (*Eremophila sturtii*) and *Dodonaea viscosa* before entering Hungerford—the border town.

The post office is in New South Wales and the rest of the town in Queensland. We made a few enquiries at the hotel, and then crossed the Paroo again. It had here a wide bed with several small waterholes and a stream about a foot in width still running. We camped on ground that had been flooded; it made very hard bedding.

Early next morning we heard from the trees along the river the wonderfully liquid and melodious notes of the Black-throated (Pied) Butcher-Birds and also those of the Harmonious (Grey) Thrush. Galahs were, as usual, numerous. These birds are increasing all through this country since the departure from their happy hunting grounds of the Aborigines, who, raiding all the creeks constantly for young birds, acted as a natural check to



The route followed is shown by the dotted line.

their increase. Ringnecks, White-shouldered Caterpillar-eaters, White-plumed, Black, and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, and Yellow-throated Miners were common. Many pairs of White-browed Wood-Swallows were nesting. The Brown Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*) was very active amongst the leaves of the box-trees, searching for minor forms of life, clinging head downwards to the terminal branchlets, or hovering in front of them. Very little escaped it, and it was always on the move.

Leaving camp we still followed up along the Paroo on a good road. The vegetation became more varied as we proceeded north

and the country became more thickly timbered. Ringbarking and burning off seemed strange to us from the borderland of the desert. Eighty miles of this road brought us to Eulo. The sandy country on the way supported a scrub of Gidgee (*Acacia Cambagei*), Ironwood (*Acacia excelsa*), Mulga (*Acacia aneura*), with Bloodwood, Beefwood, and *Eremophila Sturti*, which is however, gradually giving place to *E. Mitchelli*. On the flooded ground *Eucalyptus ochrophloia* is flowering freely; *Eucalyptus bicolor* is still common, with *Eremophila bignoniæflora* and *E. polyclada*. Late rains had fallen in places, and as a consequence the country was covered with flowering herbage for miles. Further on was a tract of dry country, where there was little more than the timber and bigger shrubs. Yellow-throated Miners, Little Friar-birds, and White-plumed Honeyeaters were feeding on the blossoming Yapunyahs and Bloodwoods. Harmonious Thrushes, Brown Flycatchers, Brown Tree-creepers, Grey-crowned Babblers (*Pomatostomus temporalis*), Red-capped Robins, Yellow-tailed, and Chestnut-tailed Thornbills were common, and also Blue-bonnets, Galahs, and Weejugglers or Pink Cockatoos (*Cacatua leadbeateri*). Eulo is a small hamlet, consisting of a hotel and a few houses.

Our road now turned east, leaving the Paroo and crossing the range that divides this river from the Warrego, another tributary of the Darling. After leaving Eulo we passed through thick Gidgee, Mulga and Beefwood scrub for several miles, then the country opened out before we crossed a gravel ridge which marked the southern end of the Cunnamulla Range, separating the Paroo from the Warrego. Here we noted a very pretty *Dodonæa*, with pinnate leaves (*D. boroniæfolia*), its seed vessels in all shades of colour from green and yellowish-green to richest dark crimson. Near Moonjarree Station the country was dry and only scantily covered with herbage. As we neared the Warrego some very symmetrical Murray Pines (*Callitris robusta*), with several fine Wilgas (*Geijera parviflora*) gave the country a park-like aspect. Our road wound through bordering box and gum trees before crossing the Warrego to enter Cunnamulla. This is a considerable town of from 1,500 to 2,000 inhabitants, dependent upon the surrounding grazing areas for its livelihood. It is the terminus of the railway line that runs south from Charleville. A new shire hall is to be built and a new hospital and maternity wards are in course of erection. The water supply is from an artesian bore which has a daily flow of a million and a half gallons. The water is excellent for drinking and all domestic uses, and as it comes hot from the taps in the town we revelled in a hot shower-bath after our long and dusty trip. The streets are well kept, and we were interested in the curious bottle tree (*Brachychiton rupestris*), with its bulging trunk and fine shady top, first obtained in this locality by Major Mitchell. Peaceful Doves were quite at home in the street trees.

MUSEUM OF VICTORIA

We left Cunnamulla on the 24th, taking the road which ran north along the Warrego to Charleville, a distance of 123 miles. It passed through interesting forest country, in which we noted Sulphur-crested Cockatoos, Galahs, Cockatiels, and Crimson-wing Lories. Choughs and Apostle-birds were in flocks and common. Grey-crowned Babblers (*Pomatostomus temporalis*) were first seen half-way between Eulo and Hungerford, on the Paroo, and have entirely replaced the White-browed (*P. superciliosus*) and the Chestnut-crowned (*P. ruficeps*). Harmonious Thrushes were frequently seen and heard. We camped for the night on the river bank, which was here clothed with box, bloodwood and red-gum, with an under-scrub of tea-tree. Boobook Owls and Owlet Nightjars called during the night. The Koala (Native Bear), which here finds its western limit, also made itself heard frequently. In the morning, Dr. Chenery and I went up and down the river, but found little of interest, so we moved on. The trees and shrubs became more plentiful and varied and of better growth as we travelled north into a region of greater rainfall. Nearing Charleville we passed through a scrub of Silver-leaved Ironbark (*Eucalyptus melanophloia*), in which were many interesting shrubs and a rough tussocky grass (*Triodia Mitchelli*), which exhaled an agreeable perfume, apparently from the leaves, which must be fairly rich in some essential oil. On the outskirts of Charleville we passed several tall, graceful, clean-limbed Eucalypts with dark tessellated butts (*E. tessellaris*).

It was Saturday midday when we entered the town and hurried to enquire as to a likely camping-place near the town, scrub and water being named as essentials. We were recommended to go to Ambathala Station, 70 miles out on the Adavale road. We decided, however, to retrace our steps and to camp on the Warrego for the week-end. We had lunch in the Ironbark scrub passed through earlier in the day, and noted the Noisy Friar-bird (*Philemon corniculatus*), the Little Friar-bird (*P. citreogularis*), Jacky Winter (*Microeca fascians*), the Little Thornbill (*Acanthiza nana*), the Brown Weebill (*Smicrornis brevirostris*), the Noisy Miner (*Myzantha garrula*), and Greenie (*Meliphaga penicillata*). During the night Boobook Owls and Native Bears (Koalas) were heard in the river timbers. We noted here Bronzewings, Crested Pigeons and Peaceful Doves. Early in the morning a pair of Eastern Shrike-tits were seen searching the trees for food. A Square-tailed Kite (*Lophoictinia isura*) was commencing a nest on a horizontal fork of a tree growing by our camp. The bird's method was to sail slowly over the tree-tops till a suitable dry branch was seen; this was swooped upon and snatched off with the bird's claws without stopping, carried to the nesting site, and transferred to the bill before alighting, when it was arranged on the fork. The bird had great trouble with these first sticks of the foundation, as they frequently slipped off, and fell to the ground. Sometimes the wings would

be spread downwards to surround the stick till it was arranged by the bird's bill. Many Hawks use their wings in this way when capturing their prey to prevent its escape. Two sticks out of every three brought back would be dropped; but no attempt was ever made to recover fallen sticks from the ground, nor were any gathered from the ground elsewhere; all were snatched from the tree-tops. This species is a rarity in the southern parts of Australia, this pair being the first that I have seen in forty years. After breakfast Dr. Chenery and I went across the river to investigate the scrub along the channel, as we thought it a likely place to find the long-lost Charleville Scrub-Wren (*Sericornis tyrannula*), but we were unsuccessful. The type specimen was obtained at Charleville many years ago, deposited in the Brisbane Museum, and lost, so that no collection now has any specimen of this bird. At the present time it is the only Australian bird described from a single specimen. Our search was fruitless, and we went from the river to try the country out from its western side. At first this consisted of open forest of Yapunyah, Gidgee, Mulga, and *Eremophila Mitchelli*. The two Friar-birds previously mentioned, Miners, Greenies, and Peaceful Doves were numerous; Brown Tree-creepers and Brown Flycatchers (Jacky Winters) were common. We passed on to a gravelly ridge covered with Mulga and Gidgee scrub with a thick underbrush of flowering shrubs. There was also a considerable amount of dead timber lying about. We noted here the Little, the Chestnut-tailed and the Yellow-tailed Thornbills. A nest of the last species containing three fresh eggs of the Tit with one of the Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo was found. We saw here the White-browed Tree-creeper (*Climacteris superciliosa*), the Orange-winged Sittella (*Neositta chrysoptera*), the Grey Fantail (*Rhipidura flabellifera*), and the Black and White Fantail (*R. leucophrys*). We took for identification the Brown Honeyeater (*Stigmatops indistincta*), a very lively bird in its movements and a beautiful songster. Apostle-birds (*Struthidea cinerea*) were in many parties. Red-capped Robins and Rufous Whistlers (*Pachycephala rufiventris*) were common. On our way back along the river we noted a party of Little Cuckoo-Shrikes (*Graucalus robustus*).

After lunch and a rest we went out into the scrub over the river, passing first through a belt of open forest of Pines, Mulga, and fine tall Moreton Bay Ashes. In an Ash tree a Whistling Eagle had its nest at a safe height. In the scrub we noted Little Thornbills (*Acanthiza nana*); a pair were working at a half-finished nest in an *Eremophila Mitchelli*; Red-winged and Ring-neck Parrots, Yellow-throated and Noisy Friar-birds, Noisy Miners, Brown Flycatchers, and Willy-Wagtails. Greenies were numerous, and as usual were bullying every other bird of their own or smaller size. A pair of Orange-winged Sittellas were

seen building high up on a dry branch of a Moreton Bay Ash. A pair of Kookaburras and a Tawny Frogmouth were disturbed from the trees on the side of a ridge.

During the night, which was calm and beautifully moonlit, after an eclipse had passed over, we were serenaded by Boobook Owls. One we called up to the trees over our camp, where he remained calling or replying to our calls till we dozed off. There were several others calling along the channel of the river, and we found that individuals varied much in their notes.

We made an early start next morning back towards Charleville. Regaining the road we soon pulled up at a paddock where there was a fine lot of flowering *Eremophila maculata* amongst Bimble Box, Ironwood, Gidgee and Mulga. Honeyeaters feeding on the honey-bearing blooms of the *Eremophila* were numerous, and of the following species:—Friar-bird, Little Friar-bird, White-plumed Honeyeater, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Brown Honeyeater, and Spiny-cheeked Honeyeater. We also noted Brown Flycatchers, Restless Flycatchers, and Spotted Bower-birds. Resuming our journey we pulled up at the patch of Ironbark scrub and made a search of it, but found little of interest apart from the plants. We called upon a few people and replenished our supplies in Charleville, and took the westerly road towards Adavale. This road passed at first some open forest land with fine Moreton Bay Ash, Ironwood, Gidgee, and Bimble-box trees, with Pines that looked as if they had been cultivated. We went on through alternating Gidgee and Mulga scrub, with Bimble-box as the dominant Eucalypt, Yapunyah coming second. We passed over the gravelly elevation which served to separate the waters of the Paroo from those of the Warrego. It was evening before we reached the long Ambathala waterhole, which was kept full by a bore stream, and was covered with water weeds. Along the banks were many young red-gum trees, Coolibah (*E. microtheca*), *Acacia stenophylla*, *Eremophila bignoniæflora*, and *E. longifolia*. *Myoporum deserti* in flower formed a small scrub back from the waterhole amongst the Bimble-box, and, farther back still, was the edge of a thickly growing Gidgee scrub.

On the following morning Dr. Chenery and I went into the Gidgee scrub which was thick, and without undergrowth or herbage, the ground being dry and covered with dead leaves. For some distance we neither saw nor heard any birds; then the Little Thornbill (*Acanthiza nana*) was detected, and later the Chestnut-tailed Thornbill (*Acanthiza uropygialis*), Black-backed Wrens (*Malurus melanotus*) next attracted our attention, a male just completing his moult, and two females; and soon after we saw another party. We met with a pair of Sittellas (*Neositta chrysoptera*) and a family of White-browed Tree-Creepers, Grey Thrushes (*Colluricincla harmonica*), and Rufous Whistlers

(*Pachycephala rufiventris*). The Brown Honeyeater (*Stigmatops indistincta*) was again seen, and its song admired, many notes reminding one of those of the Reed-Warbler. Red-capped Robins, Friar-birds, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, and the Crested Bell-bird (*Oreoica*) were found in more open scrub. We decided to go on, ran up to the station, and then picked up the Adavale road which ran through thick Gidgee and Mulga scrubs. We saw very little bird life, as this stretch was very dry.

When we began to climb up the ironstone-gravel country of the range dividing the Paroo from the Bullo River, the vegetation began to improve. We pulled up at a gully leading into the scrub. This was at first moist, with many flowering plants and a fern growing in it. The scrub was very thick, Mulga and Gidgee, with an under-scrub of *Eremophila Latrobei*. The ground was clothed in the moister places with lavender daisies and a large yellow everlasting. A *Tecoma* was growing strongly over the trees and flowering freely, with large cream-coloured flowers. On reaching the top of the divide we found the scrub looking well, and more varied. A climb down some steep cliffs on the north side of the road took us into thick scrub, which seemed to support very little bird life. Wallabies were plentiful, and we found their shelters in small caves in the sides of the cliffs. The trees here are *Eucalyptus Thozetiana*, *E. Morrisi*, *E. ochrophloia*, Wilga, Mulga, Gidgee, *Eremophila Mitchelli*, *E. oppositifolia*, *E. alternifolia*, *Cassia Eremophila*, and *C. artemisioides*, and many smaller shrubs. Of birds we saw Chestnut-tailed and Little Thornbills, Harmonious Thrushes, Spiny-cheeked Honeyeaters, Red-capped Robins, Grey Fantails, and Grey-crowned Babblers (*Pomatostomus temporalis*). On this range a different species of *Dodonaea* (*D. petiolaris*) was growing, with large bladder-like seed-vessels showing the same range of colours as other members of the genus. As there was no water on the range we went on to find a camp on the nearest creek, following it up and down from where the road crossed it till we found a sufficient waterhole.

Early on the following morning we went back on to the range as I thought it a likely spot to find the Chestnut-breasted Ground-bird (*Cinclosoma castaneothorax*). After a prolonged and fruitless search we had determined to go on when our driver drew Dr. Chenery's attention to a bird which was walking leisurely across the road. He lost no time in bagging the specimen, which proved to be an adult female of this species. Looking south from the road an extended view was obtained over a sea of scrub down the length of the range dividing the two rivers. In this the birds will have a safe harbour for many years to come.

(To be continued October, 1924)



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