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BOOK NO.

1234

ILLUSTRATED.

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## Foreign Cage Birds.

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### INTRODUCTION.

THE popularity of foreign cage birds amongst all classes has increased to a marvellous extent of late years, and bids fair to place these, the most beautiful of God's creatures, foremost in the rank of domestic pets. Nor is this at all surprising, for apart from that love of novelty to which we all are prone, these brilliant plumaged captives include amongst their numbers many varieties whose songs are equal to that of the canaries which have for so many years held undisputed sway. Far be it from me to say one word against these merry little fellows, or to make unfavorable comparisons between them and their more gaudy rivals; but I am compelled to admit that the superior intelligence possessed by foreign birds secures for them a higher place in my estimation than has ever been reached by any canaries or our native songsters.

There can be no doubt but that the importation of vast numbers of birds from our colonies, during the last few years, has given a great stimulus to the fancy, especially as English amateurs were not long before they discovered that their new pets would all be sold freely in this country when kept under favorable conditions. The novelty of parakeet breeding was fatal to my own peace of mind, and the fascination which it exercised over me at the outset has grown with years, and led me into all kinds of excesses in the matter of birds. The experience thus dearly purchased has been productive of untold pleasure to myself, and if the results of my observations and experiments are found serviceable by other amateur fanciers, than the labour of consulting to paper a series of chapters upon the more popular varieties of foreign birds will have been well spent; and in this hope I am induced to undertake the task. There will be no pretensions to classification according to general; on the contrary, the specimens treated are taken at random, according to fancy, but include, as a whole, all foreign birds of which I have an intimate personal knowledge.

It is somewhat strange that writers upon this subject have hitherto neglected those very points concerning which beginners in the fancy require to be informed; and especially is this the case with regard to the details

by which an inexperienced person can detect the sex of a bird. What could be more disappointing to an amateur, who desires to breed foreign birds, than to find that the specimens upon which all his hopes were ventred are bulk males, notwithstanding that they were sold to him as a pair by some well-known dealer. There is nothing to be said in defence of such dishonest practices; but the dealers themselves who offend in this respect plead the risky nature of their business, and console themselves by adding, that "the hens die, and somebody must have the cocks!" It is a curious fact that the females should succumb to the change of climate in much larger numbers than male birds; but as this is especially noticeable in the American and Australian varieties, the explanation is probably to be found in the fact, that the climatic change is not sufficient to stop egg production, although it causes inflammatory symptoms, similar to those which kill our hen canaries when allowed to nest too early in the season.

The importation of foreign birds into this country has grown to such vast proportions of late years that one is almost at a loss to imagine where a market can be found in which to dispose of the hundreds of thousands of specimens which annually pass through the hands of our great bird importers. The explanation is very simple. Some three or four men in this country have, by a system of agency, secured a monopoly of the trade, and from these men the continental as well as English bird dealers, obtain their stock. It is, therefore, no uncommon thing for one of these "merchants" to receive and dispose of a thousand foreign birds in one week; sending consignments to most of the chief cities in Europe. The mode of packing varies considerably, the parakeet tribe being secured with gauze wire and iron bars, whilst some of the more delicate varieties are protected from injury by canvas-lined boxes. The birds are crowded as close as herrings, and this appears to answer better than giving more space, for the close contact yields additional warmth, and each bird forms a "buffer" for his neighbour, thus breaking the many rough jars and concussion inevitable to long journeys by sea and land. The percentage of loss in transit is much smaller than might be imagined, but a few hours' delay is frequently productive of serious consequences to the plumage of the birds, especially if short of water. Parakeets are sure to strip each other's heads, necks, or backs, under these conditions; the poor birds apparently seeking moisture from the stump-ends of the feathers. Drinking troughs, with a sponge fastened inside, are undoubtedly the very best preventives, but the sponge is frequently omitted for short journeys, and an immense amount of suffering is thereby inflicted. I recently had a superb pair of turquoises sent me one very hot day by a friend, and although they had only been two hours without water, yet, upon arrival, they were contentedly eating each other's feathers, and had completely stripped each other's backs! The manikin and such tribes, too, are addicted to the same mild form of cannibalism, and it is not an unusual thing for a couple of a hundred or more of these birds to be

devoid of feathers, save wings and tail, when they reach England. The dealers say that in every instance of this kind they are sure to find one or two birds amongst the lot in perfect plumage, and these are credited with having caused all the damage upon their fellow passengers. I have made several experiments, but failed to verify this statement; indeed, the deceased specimens which I have bought from time to time all behaved themselves remarkably well, and exhibited no signs of feather-eating whilst in my possession.

Purchasers of newly-imported birds run great risks of loss, even when the specimens are healthy, as the climate change kills large numbers of these which recover the ill-effects of foul overcrowded cages and dirty water. Birds with bad plumage should, therefore, be rejected, as should those showing any signs of moult, for the first change of feathers here is a most critical ordeal to those varieties which have been brought from hot climates. For my own part, I would rather have a bird immediately upon its landing, than take one which a dealer has had caged in his shop several months. Such birds are all diseased, and they are dear at any price. One of the worst symptoms amongst newly-imported birds is tameness, and I commend this fact to amateurs who may venture upon such a risky speculation as to rely on their own judgment and the dealer's word when buying stock.

I have kept birds under every conceivable difficulty, and during the early years of my life, as a sailor, these bird-fancying proclivities made me a great nuisance to my messmates. Cape pigeons, Penguins, Boobies, and Gannets were at various times objects of my great solicitude; but spite of the kindly indulgence of friendly captains, I was reduced to the necessity of keeping my pets in the "chains," or mizen top, for so great was the prejudice of the crews that they resented the friendly overtures of these birds by throwing them overboard, declaring that they had "jaws like a pair of shears." Then I took to Parrots; but this led to official complaints, that "the watch below could not get to sleep." Quails were a great success. How I used to take down my "dickey box" of a morning, and revel in the sight of those chubby little fellows trying to scratch the print off an old newspaper, and then demurely make-believe to pick up the til bits! The loss of these birds nearly broke my heart; they were made into a pie during my watch on deck in honour of a birthday in our mess! It was some time before I ventured upon introducing any successors to the quail; but the birds of Japan demolished all my good resolutions, and I was once more the owner of a collection which eclipsed all their predecessors. The history of those seven years' bird fancying in Africa, India, China, and Japan would be out of place here; but, looking back, my feathered pets form the most pleasurable recollections of that period of my life, and they certainly afforded a source of enjoyment which was denied to my associates.

All persons should keep birds, provided they can give their personal attention to the management, but not otherwise. The mere possession

of an aviary as an article of furniture, to be cared for and tended by servants, is sure to be productive of a satisfactory result. An intimate knowledge of the subject is quite unnecessary to a beginner, provided he feels an interest in his pets, for a love of the work will inevitably lead to an early understanding of matters of detail, and his birds will afford an inexhaustible source of wholesome recreation and enjoyment. That the love of birds grows upon those who keep them at the outset to gratify a whim, has been abundantly proved by innumerable instances which have come under my own observation; and many persons of my acquaintance who commenced the fancy with a pair of birds, have now well-stocked aviaries, or rooms fitted up as such, in which their pets fly loose and breed at will.

It is the usual practice for men who enter upon a work of this kind to flatter themselves that they are about to supply a want, and I confess to being impressed with the belief that a handy book of reference by which amateurs may readily identify the varieties and sexes of foreign birds, and get hints as to their treatment in confinement, is just the very thing which is now greatly needed, and the want of which deterr many persons from entering upon a pursuit which otherwise would yield them an immense amount of pleasure. Naturalists, whose works are replete with information as to the habits of birds in their wild state, all fail to assist the amateur, who wants to know, from the practical experience of some observant person, how to keep his rich-plumaged pets in perfect health, and how to induce them to reproduce their species when in confinement. Whether or not I possess the ability to impart the needed information remains to be seen, and I leave my readers to judge for themselves; but the few occasional articles contributed by me on the subject of breeding foreign birds in confinement, entailed upon me consequences which would have made me hesitate ere I put pen to paper, could I have foreseen them. Since the appearance of those articles in the pages of *The Bazaar* I have been inundated with correspondence from all parts of the country seeking advice, and as many as twenty letters have reached me by one post, the writers pleading, as an apology for troubling, the fact that no book was capable of supplying the information they sought. In self defence, therefore, I have consented to the publication of my collected observations upon foreign cage birds, and I sincerely trust that my readers will find as much pleasure in their efforts to induce reproduction amongst these, the most beautiful of the feathered tribe, as the pastime has afforded me. That success will be measured by perseverance and watchful care, is, of course, to be understood at the outset, and I do not anticipate that every one who enters upon the pursuit will bring to bear upon it the enthusiasm and devotion which are only the results of long continued attention to a particular fancy; but still a fair measure of success in foreign bird breeding will assuredly reward all those who strive to attain it, and who carefully follow the directions hereafter laid down.

That my work will be utterly deficient of scientific arrangement or

pretension, and that nothing but plain matter-of-fact English will be employed, to the exclusion of technical terms, must be premised, as I write for the lovers of those beautiful birds which modern intercommunication with distant lands has placed within the reach of all classes; and I leave to the scientific student the study of the standard authors upon the natural history of the subject.

---

## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL MANAGEMENT.

THERE is considerable difficulty in giving any general instructions as to the management of an aviary, for the reason that, with foreign birds, each variety has to be treated differently; and I therefore propose to abridge my remarks now, but to append full particulars of the treatment required at the conclusion to the descriptions of the birds themselves. This will afford an easy means of reference, and it appears to me to be the most satisfactory way of making the matter clear to everyone.

An out-door aviary is, no doubt, the very best place in which to keep the hardy and large varieties of birds, but unfortunately everyone has not the means or convenience necessary for the construction of such places. Those less fortunate of my readers may, however, take comfort, for even should they be unable to command a little dog-hole of an attic, and to make it into a birdroom, they have still left them a very large number of the most beautiful varieties of foreign birds which will breed in cages. What can be more fascinating than to watch the tiny wax-bills, Bengalese, Zebra finches, and such "wee" specimens in their nesting arrangements, and to note the lavish affection these little creatures exhibit one towards the other? What ready to admit the manifest advantages of those whose space and means permit of handsome aviaries, yet I doubt if their possession can confer greater or more intense pleasure than is to be derived from the possession of a good wreny cage—made by one's own hands—and containing a few pairs of the lovely little birds above referred to, or others of kindred varieties. Permanent structures, built of brick or rockwork form the best aviaries out of door, and where old summer houses exist, which are capable of conversion, the expense of fitting them for birds is comparatively trifling. A south or westerly aspect is desirable, though not absolutely necessary unless you wish to keep the delicate varieties, and even then these tender birds can be caught up in the autumn and kept indoors during the winter. This, however, will not be necessary unless the bird house opens to the north or east winds, for there is scarcely any variety of bird imported into this

country but will stand the severity of our winters if comfortably housed and well fed. It is the empty seed box which does more mischief than the east wind, though the latter gets all the discredit. As the keeping together of different varieties necessitates the use of half a dozen kinds of seed, I strongly recommend the use of separate saucers for each, placing all the saucers in a round tray, like the lid of a pork tub, which should be suspended by a thick wire from the centre of the roof (Fig. 1), thus securing the seed from mice, and saving all waste. Should you mix the seeds, each bird will scatter it about in order to find his favourite sort, and the waste will be very considerable. The tray may be ornamented with virgin cork, and so form rather a pretty ornament than otherwise. The red garden saucers make the best seed pans, being easily cleaned and inexpensive, and the birds should have a fresh supply of food regularly every morning and afternoon; care being taken to blow out all the husks



FIG. 1.

before renewing the seed. The water, too, should be renewed at the same intervals, and I prefer an open pan before all the more elaborate contrivances. A circular bath, made of iron and enamelled, is the very best thing you can have, and this should be placed about a foot or two from the ground upon a pedestal of some kind, or the birds will draggle their feathers on the ground when bathing and soil their plumage. Failing anything more ornamental, a stout forked branch of harked oak may be driven into the ground and made to answer the purpose of a wash-stand (Fig. 2), the arms of which will furnish comfortable perches where the birds can preen and dry themselves after their "tub." If wood with the rind upon it is used for this purpose, the birds will be attracted to whittle the bark away, and thus lead to the water being made foul. At least once a

week let the place be thoroughly swept out and receive a thick coat of fine sharp gravel and sand; but should the space be small, and its occupants numerous, it will be necessary to sweep and garnish more frequently, especially during the summer months.

A cheap aviary may be constructed as a lean-to, if there is a good high wall with a south aspect available for the purpose; but should boards be used for constructing the bird-house, it will be absolutely necessary to have an outer covering of some kind—thatch I prefer—to prevent draughts, which are fatal to all kinds of birds, no matter how hardy. Galvanised netting is objectionable for aviary or cage purposes, and it will, moreover, cost quite as much or more than properly made wire panels for the fronts of aviaries or cages, even when the latter are fitted with doors. There are



FIG. 2.

so many cheap wire-workers in London, in the vicinity of the Euston-road, that it would be invidious to name any one man; but I certainly recommend my amateur friends to compare the prices before using netting, which gets warped, and never looks well.

A circular or octagon shaped aviary is more pleasing to the eye than a square building; yet I give a decided preference to the latter, because, in the first place, it affords much greater accommodation, and also because it is easier of construction and less expensive than the other two. A pointed thatched roof, too, will greatly improve the appearance, but it will be absolutely necessary to board under the thatch, or to cover with fine wire netting, or you would, within a week, find your bulgerigars roosting in some neighbouring trees! As the cost of wood is less than wire, I give prefer-

once to the former, especially as it adds warmth to the structure, and affords protection from the effects of decayed thatch. With regard to the size of a garden aviary, you cannot give too much room, the larger the place the greater will be your success, for the birds will not be so likely to disturb each other. The following are the dimensions, and details of a medium-sized cheap aviary (Fig. 3) which answers well: Frontage 10 ft., depth 8 ft., height to eaves 8 ft. Four uprights (larch poles) well placed in the ground, one at either corner, and supporting a frame which carries the rafters. These go up on either side and form a span roof, the whole structure being covered with feather-edged boards, which are first tarred and then thatched. Fig. 4 shows the house complete, A being

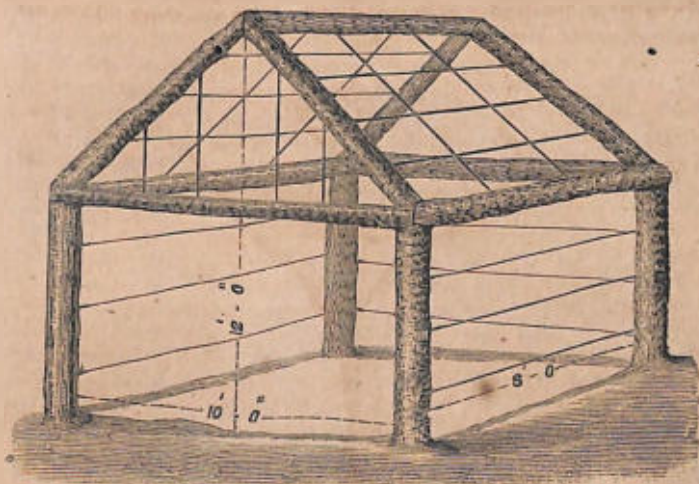


FIG. 3.

thatch, B wire front, C upright post, and D door. The front should be all wire, unless it is desired to save expense, in which case an opening can be left in the centre, 6 ft. square, and the extra privacy thus afforded to the birds will not be without good results.

It is absolutely necessary to guard against rats, and the only effectual way of keeping out these vermin is to bury a piece of fine mesh wire netting in a trench at least 12 in. deep all round the aviary, fixing the upper edge by means of small staples to the boards. The damage which a rat will do, should one get into the aviary, is too terrible to contemplate. I have known an instance where a female rat killed forty foreign birds in one night, including amongst their number several cockatils. That rat came again the next night, and brought her progeny, when the whole family were "annihilated" by a Skye terrier.

For six years I waged a war of extermination against rats, and the birds they succeeded in killing in that period represented a considerable sum of money. Rats are sure to be attracted to outdoor aviaries, and no pains should be spared to make the birds secure against their attacks, and to keep a watchful eye upon the weak points of the structure. For-remember, a stitch in time saves—the birds.

With regard to the internal fittings they must depend upon the varieties of birds which are intended to be kept, and as I shall give full details of what are the best surroundings for the varieties here treated of, my readers can adapt their aviary furniture to suit the tastes of the birds which they possess or may select. Rustic logs of rotten wood, however, may be piled from floor to roof, if they can be obtained, and thus form a happy hunting ground for all or any of the parakeet tribe, furnishing them with an inexhaustible source of amusement. How these lively little fellows will climb about the logs, keeping up an incessant warbling chatter, and peeping into every crevice and hole as if in search of something they had lost, and when at last they hit upon a spot which answers their requirements, they work with all the energy of which they are capable, whittling away the wood with their curved beaks, and boring nesting holes as cleanly as if the operation were performed with an augur. This burrowing propensity in the parakeet is a great advantage to the amateur, as it enables him to keep nest building birds in the same aviary without fear of their more powerful companions tearing up and stealing the nests when they were made—not but what such mishaps do occur now and then, and especially when an aviary is first established and the birds are strange to each other's society. Some of my friends express their astonishment to see me keeping so many varieties together, and tell doleful tales how certain of their birds were so terribly disagreeable to the others that they could not be kept together. I have carefully noticed the tempers of the varieties which have from time to time been kept together by me, both in aviaries and cages, and I have arrived at a fairly accurate knowledge of which birds can be confined together successfully. This knowledge is more important than anything to a beginner in the fancy, for the consequences of getting a really vicious pair of birds amongst the defenceless varieties is certain to be something serious, and may lead to disappointment and disgust. I will endeavour hereafter to classify the birds which may and may not be trusted together, and will also note the disposition of each variety as I describe them.

Now let me say a few words to those bird-loving friends who are compelled to keep their pets in cages. These amateurs may be assured of my heartiest sympathy, and that I will spare no pains to make clear the means by which they, too, can share the pleasures of a study which, of all others, possesses a charm to which few men are insensible. I commenced foreign bird breeding in cages, and the ecstasy with which I saw my first half dozen young budgerigars emerge from their nesting place and range themselves in single file upon a perch, as if for inspec-

tion, is indelibly fixed upon my memory. Those who possess an inherent love of pets will manage to keep them, no matter how adverse are the conditions under which they do so, and my enthusiasm for birds induced my deeply-lamented shipmate, Rear Admiral Osborn, to say that I reminded him of the boy who kept a leech in a blacking bottle, and who was in the habit of whistling to his pet and calling him "Pretty Charley."

The chief drawback to foreign bird breeding in cages is the variations of temperature in ordinary living rooms, and the draughts to which the birds are frequently subjected. Gas and smoke are both pernicious in their effects, and little good need be looked for where either vitiate the atmosphere in which the birds are made to live. The presence of those persons whom the birds are accustomed to see will in no way interfere with

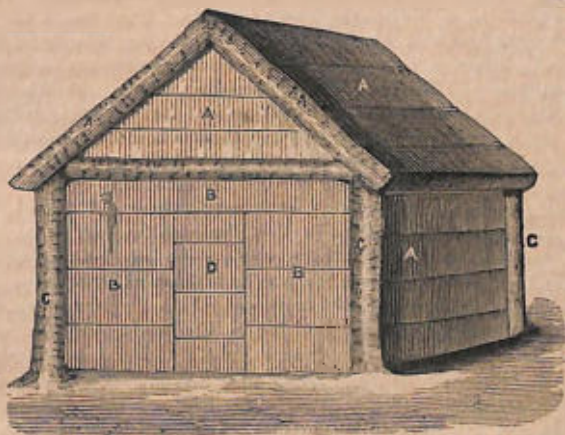


FIG. 4.

their domestic arrangements; on the contrary, I have a pair of Bengalese who make the most ardent demonstrations of their incubatory intentions, in a cage upon my table. I now write, and the male bird keeps up constant solicitations for strips of feather from my quill pen as a lining for their nest. Well, I will give him the only remaining piece, and he is off in an instant to the oblong nest so skilfully woven in the corner of his little waggon-shaped cage, and plopping into the mouse hole entrance, he calls at the top of his voice to the little white and brown wife, who is just now intent upon some ants' eggs. Both birds, however, assist in the disposal of this feather, but it has attached a nasty twisted bit of quill which refuses to lie flat, so that after much twittling, and fruitless exertion, the hen darts after a stray ant at the bottom of the cage and leaves her lord and master to make the best use he can of

the feather. He suddenly determines to stick it aloft, and taking the material on his head, climbs steadily up till his crown comes in contact with the mossy roof, when the offending feather is forced in sufficiently far to insure its holding whilst some fibres are carefully drawn across, from side to side, the whole being repeatedly pressed upwards into position by the bird's back. When at last the job is neatly completed, the little fellow rushes off in great glee to his mate, sets up a comical dance, after the fashion of the "Perfect Cure," and swelling out his feathers like a broody hen, accompanies the dance with a song as amusing as are the antics in which he indulges. This completed, the little wife returns with him to inspect the latest improvement, and it is most amusing to watch them sitting side by side in the nest, the male bird throwing sidelong glances at the roof whenever his spouse ceases her careful preening of his head and neck feathers. However, this is a digression; "cages first, and then the birds," being the proper order of things.

It is, I know, a very common practice for beginners to keep foreign birds in the old-fashioned canary breeding cages, but the poor birds lead a dreary, miserable life, and their owners lose all enjoyment of those lively lovable habits which distinguish them when more suitably housed. A waggon shaped cage is in every respect the best that can be used, and if the tray is made of zinc instead of wood, so much the better. Both food and water should be kept inside, as it lessens filth and "mess," both of which are serious drawbacks to that feminine interest in bird keeping which so greatly contributes to success - to say nothing of domestic peace and quietude. Recesses too, may be utilised as aviaries with advantage, but where this is done the most scrupulous cleanliness will be necessary to prevent parasites colonising in the walls, and the wire front should be made in such a way as to admit of being taken bodily out, whilst the limewash brush is freely used, say once every three months at least. Prevention is better than cure, and a constant bath of clean water is the only protection against red mites, which are sure to make their appearance unless precautionary measures are adopted.

Nearly all these small varieties of foreign birds which find favour as cage breeders in this country are accustomed to eat, a great number of insects when in their wild state, and although these birds may be kept in perfect health and good plumage when fed upon millet and canary seed, yet they rarely breed unless more stimulating food is supplied. Hard boiled eggs is, of course, the substitute for animal food most easily obtained, but it frequently happens that the birds refuse to touch it. Ants and their eggs are the most tempting viands, and to these may be added meal worms and maggots, or even minute pieces of under-done meat will sometimes find favour where other things have been rejected. These remarks, however, do not apply to any of the parakeet tribe—they only require green food in addition to seed. But the details of feeding must be left for treatment at greater length when the birds themselves are dealt with later on.

Many persons have asked me as to the suitability of small conservatories for aviaries, and I think it well to say here that such places require to be covered with felt or thatch, in order to maintain a more uniform temperature, otherwise the birds would be baked in the summer and frozen in the winter. Artificial heat, too, is objectionable, except for birds imported in the autumn, or for some of the very delicate birds. Greenhouse cages ought always to be placed on the ground, as those containing anything approaching a collection of birds are sure to get soiled, no matter how much attention they receive, and the warmth of the place induces frequent bathing, so that it is next to impossible to keep a cage nice. A circular wire aviary, with a pointed roof, forms quite a pretty feature in a conservatory, especially if there is an ornamental wire shelf around the base of the cage, upon which to keep a row of gay flowering plants. In such a structure may be kept the brilliant plumaged birds of Madagascar and Africa, the splendour of their plumage rivaling the

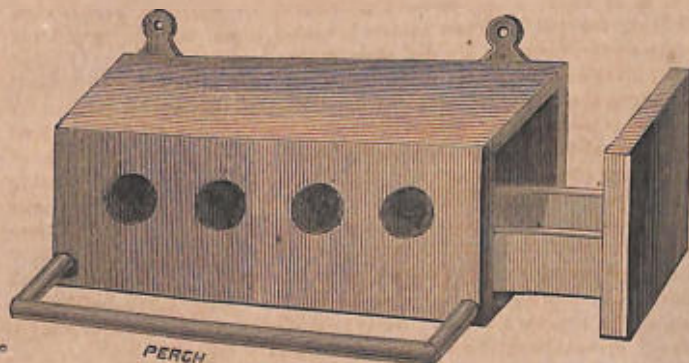


FIG. 5.

gorgeous tints of an Eastern sunset, and defying the imitative powers of the most gifted artists. Birds and flowers are fit associates, and, apart from ornamental considerations, the gay song of the birds will enliven the place, and add a new interest to the attractions which bloom and foliage possess, for most of us, in our long dreary winters, when all out of doors is covered with ice and snow. The fortunate possessors of heated conservatories may add to their attractions by liberating in them a few pairs of the tiny ornamental finches, some of which are scarcely half the size of an English wren. These birds would do no damage even to the most delicate plants and flowers, on the contrary they would keep down the insects which frequently vex the hearts of our gardeners. The ventilating sashes must of course be protected with fine wire netting, and a food supply can be so arranged—by the use of "hoppers," (Fig. 5) —to prevent the slightest untidiness or mess. Birds of the varieties

indicated will, when kept under such conditions, breed late in the summer, and their nests are all very similar to that of our long-tailed tit. The materials to be provided are grass blades, silver moss, strips of brass, asparagus sprays, the tufted heads of pampas grass, and feathers. With these will be woven a structure which, to my mind, is calculated to excite greater admiration than the most gaudy exotic plant that ever hothouse produced. The nests are egg-shaped, and have a circular entrance at one side, the hole being about 2 in. in diameter. Further details as to peculiarities, habits, and management of these tiny pets will be given later on.

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THE RUDGERIGAE.

(*Melospiza undulata*.)

## CHAPTER II.

### THE BUDGERIGAR.

(*Melopsittacus Undulatus*)

<i>Warbling Grass Parakeet</i> (Wood).	<i>Nannodes undulatus</i> (Linnaeus).
<i>Zebra Parakeet</i> (English dealers).	Transactions).
<i>Psittacus undulatus</i> (Shaw).	<i>Casmary Parrot</i> (Colonists).
<i>Undulated Parrot</i> (Latham).	<i>Estscherrygale</i> (Aborigines).
<i>Euphonia undulata</i> (Wagler).	<i>Scalloped Parakeet</i> (Capt. Sturt).

Of all the parakeet tribe this variety has found most favour in England, and deservedly so, for not only is the plumage exquisitely beautiful, but its gentle loving disposition is sure to win the hearts of those who keep it. Lately it has become the fashion to call these birds budgerigars, but they were formerly known as warbling grass parakeets, or zebra parakeets. By whatever name they are called, these graceful little creatures will ever hold a foremost place in my estimation, and I heartily recommend them to my bird-loving readers.

The budgerigars are Australian birds, congregating in large flocks upon the inland pastures, and feeding upon the blades, flowers, and seeds of high grass. They breed in hollow trees, burrowing into the dead wood like rats, and a tree thus appropriated is perfectly honeycombed with nesting holes.

This bird is about six, in length, the ground colour underneath being pea green, the forehead yellow, and the whole of the neck, back, and wing feathers being finely pencilled with bright orange, giving the appearance of minute zebra-like stripes. In mature specimens this marking is very clear and sharp; the ground colour of the wings is then an olive black, each feather being edged round with a fine border of rich yellow. The tail feathers are dark blue; on either cheek there is a turquoise patch, and four other circular dots of the same bright colour form a necklace around the yellow throat. The markings of the female are precisely similar to those of her mate, and the only means of identification of the sexes is by a sore at the base of the beak. This "nose" or cure is a deep indigo blue in the male, whilst the "nose" of the young female is a light buff or fawn colour; though it merges into a tinge of light blue at the edges during the nesting season of birds over two years old. The females suffer most from the change of climate, and this is gen-

ably due to their egg production being very little checked by confinement. Whatever the cause, hen budgerigars are always scarce, and in order to dispose of the surplus males, unprincipled dealers castrate the birds' noses, thereby procuring a brown cere, in place of the toll-tale blue; and this will explain the want of success which has attended the efforts of so many persons who have tried to breed budgerigars. As a test of the sex, put the birds one by one into a small travelling cage, and make believe to catch them. The males will all cry out, keeping up a continual "Ping! ping! ping!" but the hens never make any noise. This is the best check which inexperienced amateurs can adopt if they have any doubt about their pets.

In purchasing these birds of a dealer, it is safer to buy young ones, as by so doing you can insist upon the hen having a smooth buff nose, without any suspicion of "scale" upon it, and showing no blue around the edges. Such birds would not breed under two years, but they would settle down better in confinement than older specimens which had longer enjoyed the sweets of liberty. Young birds are somewhat rusty in appearance, their first season's feathers being dull and their markings undefined; nor do they attain their full size until after the first moult, when they fill out considerably.

I have heard people who kept budgerigars call these lovely little birds "stupid things." But those who entertain that opinion have never exerted themselves to win the confidence and love of their pets, or they would have found out that, spite of the absorbing affection one for the other which appears to engross the whole attention of these birds, they are capable of forming an equally intense feeling for their master or mistress, and to be very demonstrative in their desire to show it. This, of course refers only to home-bred birds; and as an illustration I may mention the case of a lady to whom I gave a pair of very young budgerigars hatched in mid-winter. They were fed with soap from the hands of their mistress, and were allowed to go loose about the room during certain hours of the day. They not unfrequently alighted upon her head or shoulder, and sat there billing and cooing with evident delight, the male bird occasionally offering her a share of the tit-bits with which he was regaling his mate (in the same manner as a pigeon feeds its young), and keeping up at intervals that warbling note peculiar to his variety. These birds answered the call of their owner from another part of the house, and would, if liberated, go in search of her, and, sitting upon her finger, allow themselves to be carried back to their cage, apparently enjoying the caresses bestowed upon them meanwhile. Budgerigars, however, can be spiteful, as anyone may demonstrate by handling a wild specimen. I know of no bird of equal size that can bite so hard.

Of late years great numbers have been bred in this country, the only drawback being a tendency to egg-binding, which is due to the birds commencing to incubate in the middle of our winter, when, owing to the feverish, excited condition of the hens, they are very susceptible to cold, and inflammation is



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inevitably fatal when it occurs. For cage breeding a tame pair of birds is necessary, and a log of soft dry-rotted wood should be placed in the cage: first digging out a hole or two in the log as a temptation to the birds to burrow still deeper. The larger the log the better, and if the cage is small the wood can be suspended close to the roof by means of some stout brass wire, thus enabling you to clean out without disturbing the inmates. If an ordinary canary breeding cage is used, take off one end, remove all inside fittings, put in your log securely, and then replace the end. This is the arrangement which I have found to answer best with cages, but there is another. Get a wooden nut husk, and having sawn it lengthwise remove the nut, replace the sides, binding them together with wire, cut a round hole for the birds to go in, and you then have a ready made nest. This husk can be hung at an open door of the cage and your birds will very soon take the hint. I prefer the log of wood for many reasons and not the least is that it affords an inexhaustible source of amusement to the birds, for they are naturally fond of "whittling" sticks, and the holes they make are natural breeding places. They have no nests proper, and beyond a few stray chips they hatch their eggs upon the bare wood. The burrows in which they breed are made of a uniform size throughout, not unlike a rat's hole, and there appears to be no fixed rule as to the angle at which the borings are made, some birds making perpendicular descent, whilst others avail themselves of a favourable grain and go in horizontally. The smallness of these apertures led me to make experiments with a pet budgerigar of mine, and I found that his ability to turn in a tube of small size was perfectly amazing. He did it very slowly, taking a grip with his feet, and, working his head one way and tail the other, round he went as if on a pivot, in a space which looked scarcely large enough to admit of his going through at all, much less turn round. I satisfied myself as to the muscular action of the feet by holding him in my loosely-closed hand and making him turn round within my fingers. He objected at first, but this was not persisted in when he knew what was wanted. To go back to the cage. If the log is inside no perches will be required, but both seed and water should go within, as it is more convenient to the birds, and they consequently do better.

Now as to position. Place the cage in the quietest room you can command, but let it have a south aspect if possible, for I would rather dispense with the quietness than with the genial influence of sunshine; it is life to birds. Remember, I do not advocate cage breeding if a spare room, however small, is available as an aviary, and lest any should be deterred from trying the experiment, through fear of unpleasantness or mess, I can assure them that for nearly six years I bred budgerigars and other birds loose in rooms in my house without any annoyance or discomfort to the inmates.

When we consider the naturally active, restless disposition of the budgerigar, in its wild state, it is somewhat surprising to find the bird

so readily adapt itself to the confined space of a cage; but once give your birds their liberty in a room or outdoor aviary, and I am much mistaken if you will ever find it in your heart to cage them again. The change which takes place in birds so liberated is very remarkable; they apparently start into fresh life and activity, and find an immense amount of pleasure in exploring every nook of their new home. Nor are their physical changes less marked, for even the most weedy, woe-begone specimens, will rapidly improve in an aviary, and shortly astonish one by their increased size and brilliant plumage.

There are some birds which degenerate so quickly as these from the effects of in-breeding, and frequent change of blood is an absolute necessity if you would maintain the stamina of your stock. Loss of size and colour are the consequences which two or three seasons' inter-breeding from the same family will be sure to produce—especially if the stock all sprung from one pair of birds—and amateurs should therefore guard against this by the introduction of a fresh male every midsummer, taking care that the sexes are equally divided, as any excess of either is sure to lead to squabbles. So intense is the love of congenial society developed in the budgerigar, that he is the most miserable of husbands during the period of incubation, and should there be an odd hen in the aviary all the disconsolate males will try to find solace in her company. It is with these birds as it was with man of old—where more than one are candidates for favours there is certain to be a fight, which will prove utterly destructive to the domestic felicity of all concerned and lead to the most disastrous results.

Those who desire to appropriate a room as an aviary for foreign birds should, if possible, select a south or south-western aspect, and should fix up some large rotten logs in the most retired place in the apartment by means of stout nails driven into the wall, and strong brass wire. The object of thus raising three nesting places from the floor is to prevent the birds being disturbed by mice, whose unsuspected presence might otherwise mar all your efforts.

As an alternative to using wire and nails, it is a very good plan to fix up a shelf, staking upon it the logs of wood intended for breeding places. The birds amuse themselves by making runs under the wood, and the shelf, moreover, catches the chips, which would otherwise litter the floor. Rotten wood is vastly superior to every other kind of nesting material for all the parakeet tribe, and I look upon its use as an absolute necessity if anything like success is desired. Turned neck boxes and such like contrivances are utterly worthless, and I have had hens lay eggs upon the sand at the bottom of their cages, apparently as a silent protest against the use of such miserable substitutes for the snug quarters which a decayed tree is capable of affording. There can be no doubt that the labour of suitably fitting an aviary is well spent, and that the temptation to incubate is very much greater in proportion to the comfort in which the birds are kept.

A comparison of the results which have attended my various experiments with budgerigars shows very favourably for the room system of breeding; and this, I think, is due to the maintenance of a more even temperature than would be possible under any other conditions. Artificial heat is a dead failure, and I strongly urge my friends not to employ it under any circumstances.

With regard to the out-door breeding of these birds, the above remarks as to fittings are equally applicable, but I shall hereafter treat at greater length upon the construction and management of garden aviaries, and will reserve for that chapter those details which have not been given here.

Budgerigars usually commence their breeding season in the month of December, and continue to nest until the month of August, when they fall into moult. They lay a hatch of eggs, varying from three to six, the eggs being very like those of the English robin in size, and the colour is a transparent fleshy white. The eggs are laid every other day, and the time of incubation, from the first disappearance of the hen, is usually about three weeks; but should the number of eggs be small the hatch will take place four or five days earlier. I have had four broods in a season from one pair of birds, but this was exceptional, the usual number being three. Above all things abstain from interfering with the hen or her nest, for the mere gratification of an idle (though perfectly natural) curiosity may lose you a fine brood of birds. The young do not leave their nesting place until they are fully fledged, which stage they attain when about fourteen days old, and at the expiration of another week they discard their parents and "scratch for themselves." It is desirable to remove the youngsters to a separate aviary when they are observed to be quite independent, as their presence is likely to interfere with the production of a second brood. Both male and female assist in feeding, and it may be interesting to record the fact that, unlike other birds, who place their beaks into the open mouths of their offspring, the budgerigars take the bills of the fledglings inside their own, and then disgorge food, upon which the young birds feed themselves.

It is a good plan to familiarise the youngsters reared in an aviary by keeping them caged for a time, as by so doing they will become exceedingly tame, even permitting themselves to be handled and played with, but care must be taken not to injure them by a sudden squeeze should they nip your finger. This they will not do, as a rule, unless you hurt or frighten them, and even then a slight relaxing of the fingers by which they are held, and a re-assuring stroke of the head will allay the fear of your pet and prevent any further spitefulness. As the nip of a budgerigar's beak is—even from a young one—apt to be rather severe, ladies would do well to put on gloves before handling birds of this variety; such precautions will, however, not long be necessary, for a good understanding can quickly be established.

In disposition the English bred budgerigar is very amiable. Seldom does it occur that even the smallest of the occupants of the cage or aviary

receives the slightest injury at the beaks (I mean beaks) of my favourite parakeets; but it is only right to add a caution to amateurs to keep a watchful eye upon imported budgerigars, when first associated with other and more defenceless specimens. I have found it an excellent plan to gage my new stock, whose tempers were doubtful, in company with some Java sparrows, and a fortnight in their society produces a marked effect upon birds with a tendency to molest their companions; for the sober looking old quakers have an unmistakable habit of retaliating upon those who molest them, and the lesson is not lost upon a budgerigar who has "notions" of his superiority, and exclusive right to the bowl of everything.

*Food.*—Canary and millet are the staple articles of diet, but young budgerigars appear to relish boiled bread and milk, seasoned with cayenne pepper, and this can be given or withheld at the fancy of the owner. I use it, but without believing in the necessity for so doing. Flowering grass, such as grows by the sides of garden walks, is a very favourite food, and where this is not obtainable a fresh turf should be kept regularly supplied, or it may be varied occasionally with water cresses and groundsel; without green meat good health cannot be maintained. Avoid lettuce, it has a bad effect upon the birds. They are moderate drinkers, and not much given to "tub," but it is necessary to keep them provided with clean water, for dirty drinking fountains kill more birds than old age. Reader, make a note of that fact.

*Diseases.*—Budgerigars, like all the parrot tribe, are subject to fits, and I have noticed two distinct phases in this disease amongst these birds. In one case they usually fall from their perch, like a stone, and if not killed by the concussion, remain in a state of coma for several hours. I am inclined to the belief that death in such cases is usually the result of injuries sustained in the fall, especially as these birds require "very little killing," and not from the fit itself, for caged specimens recover more readily than birds kept in an aviary. The second description of fit is accompanied by a contraction of the *muscles* of one side, the bird working itself round and round on the ground until exhausted, when the poor little thing becomes perfectly passive. I recently had a hen attacked in this way, and she lost the use of one side for nearly a week, at the expiration of which time, however, she mounted to her perch, and within three weeks after she went to nest. Constipation is, undoubtedly, the cause of these fits, and amateurs should remember the old saw, but "Prevention is better than cure." For the first type of disease pull out a large wing feather, and if the shock restores the bird to consciousness, administer a small quantity of castor oil, by means of a quill pen. Should the feather-pulling fail, try the effects of a plunge in cold water. The first-named remedy appears cruel, but the bird is almost insensible to pain at the time of the operation, and its effects are undoubtedly beneficial; so my lady readers must not think me brutal in recommending such treatment as feather pulling and consequent blood-

letting. Where paralytic symptoms, such as those already described, accompany the fit, administer castor oil, and place the bird in a small cage, the bottom of which should be well sanded, and be sprinkled with canary seed, for the invalid will feed, notwithstanding the loss of power in its limbs.

Keep the birds supplied with green food, and they will have no fits.

Egg binding is undoubtedly the most serious evil which mars success in foreign bird breeding, and more especially with Australian parakeets, whose nestings commence long before spring weather sets in. Amateurs must, therefore, keep a sharp look out upon their birds, and upon the slightest indication of drooping wings in a hen about to nest she should be caught, and receive a dose of castor oil, a drop of which must also be used to anoint the vent, a small camel-hair brush being used for the purpose. This operation requires to be delicately performed, as a broken egg will most probably kill the hen. Another very good plan is to hold the lower part of the bird over the steam of hot water for a few minutes; but this requires a prolonged handling of the bird, which is objectionable. I believe in the efficacy of castor oil.

Newly imported budgerigars are all more or less injuriously affected by overcrowded cages, and the worst symptoms are those of diarrhoea. A liberal supply of clean sharp sand, every day renewed, is the dealer's remedy for this disease, which is, however, unknown amongst acclimatised birds.

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## CHAPTER III.

### THE TURQUOISINE.

<i>Turquoise parakeet</i> (Latham).	<i>Psittacus pulchellus</i> (Shaw and Swainson).
<i>Orange-bellied parakeet</i> (Shaw).	
<i>Chestnut-shouldered parakeet</i> , (Gould).	<i>Psittacus Edwardsii</i> (Bechst).
<i>Euphema pulchella</i> (Wagler).	<i>Nanodes pulchellus</i> (Linnaeus Transactions).

THESE birds are natives of New South Wales, and, unlike the other varieties of their tribe, they seldom congregated in flocks, preferring to keep in pairs, although a company of six or eight is sometimes found together. They resemble the budgerigar in all their habits, and, like that bird, subsist entirely upon the seeds of grass. It has become very much the fashion amongst English amateurs to speak of Budgerigars as the grass parakeets, but there are quite a numerous family of the genus *Scaneores*, in Australia, classified by scientific writers as grass parakeets, and the turquoise is one of that number. Gould, in his magnificent work upon the birds of Australia, reveals a lamentable ignorance of the most important details concerning the turquoise, and he even goes the length of giving two male birds as a "pair" in his illustration, and of assuring us that the sexes are only to be distinguished by "internal" examination! As he says the same of the budgerigar and several other varieties, I ought not perhaps to refer to this particular instance of his want of observation, but I only do so by way of supporting my earlier statement that even our best authors upon this subject failed to supply that reliable detail of information which was most needed by amateurs.

Of all the parakeets which come to this country, none are so beautiful in the delicate blending of rich plumage as the birds which form the subject of this chapter, and they are deservedly held in high estimation by all fanciers. Apart from the beauty of their feathers, the turquoisines combine extreme grace both in shape and carriage, and they, moreover, possess that great merit of hardness which admirably adapts them to bear the inclemency of our winters in an outdoor aviary. For my own



THE TURQUOISINE

(*Euphema Pulchella*.)

part I candidly confess that turquoises hold the prominent place in my estimation of the tribe to which they belong, and it has always been a source of regret with me that so few specimens are annually imported to this country; the effect of a limited supply being the maintenance of correspondingly high prices. The numbers bred here are too limited to affect the market value, and the dealers are, therefore, able to "ask and have." It is to be hoped that the increasing interest evinced on all hands in the breeding of foreign birds will result in the multiplication of the more rare species, and so place them within the reach of all classes of fanciers. It is a practice amongst the men who furnish birds for Europe to limit the supply of particular varieties occasionally, and so increase their trade value; indeed, some species are kept back altogether for a time, the results being highly beneficial to those who thus rig the market. I entertain a strong impression that turquoises have had their value increased during the past two or three years by these means, & have several other varieties of the same species of parakeet.

Turquoises are 10in. long, slim in build, with wings closely clipped up, and the plumage as fine and "hard" as that of a game cock; giving a compact form and smooth outline very similar to the budgerigar. The back feathers and wing coverts are glossy bronze green, the breast and belly shading off to pale orange, and becoming brighter between the legs. The face of the male bird is encased by a mask of brilliant turquoise blue, which extends from the forehead down to the throat, and shows to great advantage in contrast with the rich shading of the neck feathers. The shoulders and outer feathers of the wings are also fringed with the lovely turquoise tint which gives the bird its name, and the contrast of colour is greater in the wing than any other part of his body; for, upon either covert is a patch of damask red, about 2in. long, and 3in. broad, extending horizontally. The principal flight feathers are a deep marine blue, with a centre rib of black; whilst the under wing coverts are rich orange yellow. The upper tail feathers are similar in colour to the "flights," the lesser feathers underneath the tail being of the same orange tint as those beneath the wing. The female is very similar in general appearance, but she lacks two of the distinctive markings of her mate. With her a band of turquoise upon the forehead takes the place of the mask, and she is also deficient of the red patch upon the wings.

With these, as with most of the Australian parakeets, the males preponderate, and high prices, combined with the ready sale which these beautiful birds always command, tempt some dealers to resort to dishonest practices in the manufacture of "pairs." The process consists in pulling out the red patch upon the wings and destroying the blue face markings by means of caustic, which changes the mask to a dingy brown, leaving only the blue band upon the forehead. The neck feathers receive a few touches from the same magic wand, and the result is a very fair imitation of a hen.

With this caution to my readers let us pass to the more congenial subject of breeding turquoisines, but first let me preface my remarks thereon by advising amateurs not to be over sanguine, for experience proves that, even with every advantage which an intimate knowledge of these birds can supply, the results are—to use an Americanism—"very mixed." A pair of these lovely birds had been kept as cage pets for the whole of one season; every regard being paid meanwhile to their diet; and they were, consequently, in the very pink of condition. They were, moreover, exceedingly tame, permitting themselves to be caressed, and evincing the strongest attachment of which their natures are capable, towards those who fed and petted them. Quiet and undemonstrative though turquoisines are—they always impress one as being like the publican's parrot, birds that think a great deal more than they say. The particular pair of which I speak had apparently settled ideas upon the subject of reproducing their species, and they were accordingly, with many expressions of regret, transferred from their cage to the luxury of a well-furnished bird room, and the congenial company of other members of the same tribe. Here they enjoyed themselves for a whole season, making repeated attempts at nesting, but never finding a spot adapted to their taste, and so the summer passed away without any addition to the family of Mr. and Mrs. T. When the cold began to be felt in earnest, and the water in the bird-room was nightly frozen to a solid block, this pair of birds took possession of a hole in the wall, made by the removal of a brick, and there they kept themselves warm and comfortable, seldom leaving their retreat except to feed and take a little exercise. As the spring advanced it became evident that they intended to commence business; the log of rotten wood which blocked up the greater part of the hole in the wall, was whittled away most industriously, and the chips were carefully collected as nesting material. Presently the male bird ceased to share the snug quarters with his mate, but took up a position on the log outside, where he dozed his time away, except when approached by inquisitive, or it may be inquiring, friends, all of whom were driven off with a "dea in their ear." These signs were unmistakable, and when, after the lapse of a few days, Mr. T. took his turn in the nest whilst Mrs. T. refreshed herself, first at the seed pan and then at the bath, it was a very clear case of—eggs.

Of course the natural thing would have been to ascertain whether or not the hen had really laid, by a personal inspection of the nest; but then experience, dearly purchased, has taught me that such a proceeding, though perfectly natural, is also very stupid, and likely to disturb the birds and prevent their using the same nesting place a second time. I make a point of never appearing to notice the nests when close to them, and the results of this policy amply repay me for the trifling gratification which I lose thereby, for my birds continue to nest time after time in the same spot. But this is a digression. The turquoisines having been sitting about three weeks, I began to fear a failure, especially as, about this time, two rotten eggs were mixed out of the nest and thrown down upon

the floor. These eggs were about the size of a starling's, pure white in colour, and somewhat stunted and round in shape. At the expiration of five weeks from the laying of the first egg four fully fledged nestlings took their stand upon the log outside the nesting-place, and very dingy nondescript little fellows they looked. Their upper feathers were of an uniform rusty green, unrelieved by any of those bright tints which distinguish their parents, and I must own to a feeling of considerable disappointment at the external appearance of these latest additions to my family of birds. I began to question myself whether these were one of the varieties of parakeets which required three years in which to attain their full plumage, but a little reflection reassured me—this peculiarity was limited to Indian birds (make a note of the fact). April was the month in which these four birds came out, by July they had fully moulted their nest feathers and acquired the lovely turquoise "feetings" which are so especially beautiful.

This, then, is the history of my first attempt to breed turquoisines, and the progeny of the birds herein referred to may now be found in a dozen aviaries at least. They have suffered no degeneration either in stamina or colour by reason of "in and in" breeding for a period of six years, but it is right to say that a change of blood was infused into my own stock some two years since by the introduction of a very fine male turquoisine, which had been bred by a friend of mine in an out-door aviary.

Having thus, in a gossiping fashion, given directions for the management of turquoisines indoors, let me say a few words upon the subject of their treatment in garden aviaries. Like all the other members of their tribe they delight in whittling away chips from rotten wood, but they never burrow to the same extent as budgerigars, and it is therefore necessary to furnish logs or stumps, with suitable hollows in which the birds may nest. The first recorded instance of this variety breeding in England is to be found in the records of the Royal Zoological Gardens of London, where a pair successfully reared a nest of young in the year 1830. As these birds, when kept out of doors, require to be treated in a manner assimilating to their natural state, it will, as I have before stated, be necessary to furnish hollow logs as nesting places, and to pay great attention to diet. They are excessively fond of green food, and, failing a supply of grass, then do not hesitate to give groundsel, lettuce, or even cabbage.

My remarks, both as to the food and ailments of budgerigars, are so applicable to turquoisines that I need not do more than refer my readers to that chapter for information upon these two heads, but I ought to add that turquoisines are extremely gentle in disposition, rarely resenting any interference on the part of weaker birds, and it is also worthy of note that they may be handled with perfect safety, as they very seldom bite, and when they do it is scarcely more severe than the nip from a canary's beak.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ELEGANT PARRAKEET.

*Elegant grass parrakeet* (Gould).  
*Geolys-der-ang* (Aborigines of  
West Australia).

*Ground Parrakeet* (Colonists).  
*Euphema elegans* (Zoological  
Catalogue).

This is an extremely graceful bird, and has much to recommend it both in beauty of plumage and hardiness of constitution, whilst for reproductiveness in confinement the Elegant is second to none of the other members of the Australian grass parrakeet tribe, to which it belongs. This is by no means a common variety, and very few specimens find their way to England, indeed the Zoological Society of London only in 1875 became possessed of a pair of Elegants for the first time. I obtained mine originally from a Hamburg dealer, who sent them to me as "turquoisines," which they very closely resemble in general plumage and size. The Elegant, however, is somewhat more stunted in shape, has a flatter head, and a larger and more prominent eye.

The upper body colour is a lustrous olive green merging to yellow upon the breast, body, and under tail feathers; whilst a streak of pink extends backwards between the thighs to the vent. A band of bright marine blue crosses the brow from eye to eye, and the principal wing feathers are also dark blue in colour. The hen differs only from her mate by an absence of the pink between the legs, and by a lighter shade of blue upon the forehead; but it requires a practised eye to detect the differences of sex amongst young birds of this variety. So little is known of this parrakeet amongst English fanciers, that dealers commonly sell odd specimens as female turquoisines, for which there is always a great demand.

The Elegant is found in flocks upon sandy plains near the coast of South Australia, where they feed upon the seed of grass which grows in patches here and there. They breed, like all the rest of their tribe, in the holes of decayed trees, not infrequently choosing the hollows in fallen timber. The nesting months are September and October, and the old birds some-

times lay as many as seven eggs at a batch, though the eggs of the young hens rarely exceed four in number. <sup>6</sup>

As a cage pet the Elegant has little to recommend it, save its docility and rich plumage, but the poor creatures lead melancholy disappointed lives in narrow cages which depress their natural vivacity and induce one to look upon them as dull and stupid, sitting as they do stolidly upon the perch hour after hour, only changing their position in order to obtain food. Turn them loose into an aviary, however, and you will be astonished at the change in the behaviour of these seemingly quiet birds. How they will twitter and chase each other; dashing hither and thither amongst the logs and boughs with marvellous rapidity; pouncing down to the bundle of groundsel upon the floor, nibbling a flower here and there, and then one bird will turn a somersault over the edge of the bunch, holding on by his beak meanwhile, and dangling to and fro until driven to let go his hold by the mean advantage taken of his defenceless position. Round and round the groundsel pot they go, and so they keep the game alive until tired out, when a snug retreat is found amongst the logs, and the happy pair doze, side by side, for an hour. All this fun is, however, enjoyed in a quiet way, and there is neither screaming nor discordant noise of any kind; the Elegants, moreover, are quite content in each other's society, and rarely—very rarely—will they interfere with, or even retort upon any other occupant of the aviary, no matter how great the provocation.

This last quality, however, is rather a negative virtue, inasmuch as the less sensitive and more overbearing varieties are apt to take advantage of their peaceful companions, and to interfere with their domestic affairs, thereby preventing them from bringing their nesting arrangements to a successful issue. I was greatly amused upon one occasion to watch the impertinent molestation offered to a pair of these birds by a saucy little Zebra finch. This tiny champion had snugly ensconced himself, with his little wife, at the entrance of the hollow in which was deposited two Elegant's eggs, the owners of which had incautiously left their treasures for a few seconds only. They were now in great dismay to find the entrance of their home in possession of the enemy; and as each, in turn, advanced to assert their right of ingress, out came the little cock Zebra like a miniature bulldog, driving the poor parrakeets in dismay before his furious attack. Then would the champion return, blow off a series of blasts from his trumpet and settle down by the side of his wife again to receive her caresses. This performance was repeated several times, and so much did I enjoy the sight that I abstained from coming to the rescue by routing the offenders. At last the Elegants obtained a victory by stratagem. The pair advanced, one on either side of the hole, and out came the Zebra as usual, but whilst his attention was directed against one parrakeet the other slipped into the nest, inflicting a sharp bite upon the little hen Zebra in passing, and causing her to fly off in great trepidation. Whether or not her husband was ashamed of his defeat, I am unable to say, but he never

afterwards ventured to interfere with his opponents, and they successfully reared a fine brood of birds.

This was the imported pair, and they were always very irregular in their choice of time for breeding, but I noticed that their nesting was regulated by the period of moult, a disposition to go to nest exhibiting itself about eight or ten weeks after the attainment of perfect plumage. This peculiarity, however, is common to all the small grass parakeets, when the moult has been rapid and uninterrupted, and where the birds are kept in an aviary. The earliest symptoms of a desire to incubate are increased activity in the hens, and a predilection for sop and green food, together with a marked desire on the part of the male bird to feed the hen whether she likes to accept his attentions or not. They will also exhibit a tendency to sport about and chase each other in the manner already described, often stopping in the very height of their amusement to feed each other. These birds have never, in my possession, burrowed after the fashion of kindred varieties, but have always selected some disguised nesting place in which, maybe, have been reared other kinds of parakeets. They devote a considerable amount of time and labour to the scratching out of all objectionable matter, and to the fashioning of the interior to their own particular views of what a nest ought to be, but nothing is allowed to remain save the wood dust, which cannot be got out. The eggs are laid on alternate days, and although the birds spend much of their time in the burrow, still I am of opinion that the steady work of incubation does not seriously commence until a majority of the eggs have been deposited, and this conclusion is based upon the fact that the young are all hatched upon the same day, the period occupied in the process being three weeks. The parents are unremitting feeders, and as the quantity of soft food requisite to maintain a nest of young parakeets is considerable, care must be taken to keep up a constant and frequently replenished supply.

As regards the character of food and other details of management, I need not here repeat what has already been said upon this subject in the chapter on Budgerigars, for the Elegant is so closely allied to those birds that no variation of the directions there given is required to be made. The same may be said with regard to diseases and their mode of cure, and in concluding this chapter, I cordially recommend to my bird-loving readers the Elegant grass parakeet as a variety worthy of their most favourable attention.

## CHAPTER V.

### BLUE-BANDED, ORANGE BELLIED, AND ROCK GRASS PARRAKEETS.

**BLUE-BANDED GRASS PARRAKEET** (*Euphonia chrysostoma*, Gould).—In treating of the grass parakeets I feel bound to notice the fact that Gould, under the above title, gives illustrations of two birds which he classes as a distinct variety, though they in every respect resemble the Elegant parakeet already spoken of in chapter IV. and fully described therein. As the results of very careful observation and inquiry, I am forced to the conclusion that this was one of Gould's errors, and that he was misled by some slight variation of colours in the young Elegant from those of the adult bird, and so, upon slight and insufficient evidence, classed the two as distinct. I have never seen a "blue-banded grass parakeet," and all the trappers and dealers with whom I have discussed this matter, including Mr. Jammach, declare that the bird has no existence in fact.

**ORANGE BELLIED PARRAKEET** (*Euphonia aurantia*, Gould).—This, like the blue banded, is a bird of which nothing is known by English amateurs, and we have only Gould's authority for the statement that such a distinct variety of Australian grass parakeet exists. The illustration given by the author referred to is like that of a four-year-old male Elegant, with the tinge of orange red between his legs very bright.

**ROCK GRASS PARRAKEET** (*Euphonia petrophila*, Gould).—This bird is another of those mysterious specimens which Gould classed as a distinct variety. but he was fair to admit that, in outward appearance, there was nothing by which to distinguish the Rock parakeet from the orange bellied, and he classed the two as distinct, because the former nested in holes of rocks and cliffs, whilst the latter bred in the spouts of gum trees. My own very strong impression is, that these two so-called varieties are nothing more nor less than specimens of the Elegant parakeet, and that Gould was misled by varying plumage, which distinguishes these birds at different ages, a circumstance which his very

limited personal knowledge of the subject would not make him acquainted with. The fact of these birds adapting themselves to local circumstances and nesting in the holes and clefts of rocks, in the absence of hollow trees, proves nothing as to their species; for, according to my experience, every member of the parrot tribe would act in a similar manner, if they failed to find trees suited to their purpose. Nor is this a peculiarity confined to the Scansopes family. No ornithologist would be surprised to find a colony of gregarious birds nesting together amongst rocks in a wide expanse of open country, where no better place for the purpose could be found. That the curator of the Adelaide Museum has followed Gould's classification, and included these doubtful varieties in his list of Australian birds, is not at all surprising, in the face of the internal evidence of the source whence his list was compiled. Looking at the many other blunders perpetrated by Gould, I am doing him no injustice in thus recording my strong conviction that he was entirely wrong about these birds, as he is proved to have been about many others. The object of these chapters, however, is not to raise a controversy, and I should not have touched this subject but for the necessity which forced itself upon me of enumerating all the known grass parakeets.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RED RUMP.

*Psephotus Haematonotus* (Gould).

These birds find great favour with English amateurs, and deservedly so, for they are extremely hardy, graceful in form, rich in colour, active and vivacious in manner, gentle in disposition, and they moreover breed freely in confinement.

The Red Rump is a native of South Australia, where they are very abundant, congregating in flocks several hundreds strong, and falling an easy prey to the trapper. During the breeding season, however, these flocks break up, and each pair betakes itself to the seclusion of the woods, selecting for nesting purposes those spotted gum trees whose hollow trunks and branches afford abundant choice for the selection of a safe retreat. Like the grass parakeets these birds seek their food upon the ground, living chiefly upon grass seeds, and small berries, and it is therefore necessary that the Red Rump in confinement should be fed and treated in the same manner as that already recommended for their kindred varieties.

The male bird measures twelve inches in length, being thin in proportion; his upper body colour is a rich grass green, merging to yellow upon the belly, and having a tinge of pink between the legs, whilst a broad patch of brilliant red extends upwards from the base of the tail for a length of about two inches in an old specimen. The female is very sober in her garb, the whole of her body feathers being of a slaty brown, slightly shot with green, whilst a tinge of lilac fringes the edges of her shoulders. The plumage of these birds is remarkably soft, and consequently suffers more from rough handling or confinement in a small cage than any of the parakeets hitherto described; but the peculiarity referred to is common to several kindred species of Australian parakeets, and I only record the fact as a correction of the popular error that only the brilliant plumaged tropical parrots are "tender feathered."

In general appearance the Red Rump is very like the Many-Coloured, for an illustration of which see chap. V 91.

Red Rumps are not usually very demonstrative of their affection one towards another in public, but their attachment is none the less sincere, and the loss of a mate will cause the bereaved bird to withdraw himself to the most retired spot in the aviary, where he will sit silent and motionless for hours, only leaving his favourite spot to obtain food. A pair of these birds were kept together for about twelve months in a large well-furnished outdoor aviary, abounding in snug retreats amongst a mass of heath, with which the pointed roof was thickly thatched on the inside. All the winter they had amused themselves in enlarging the rat-like burrows made in every direction by the Redwings; and, as the spring advanced, it became evident, from the increased activity and incessant chatterings and flittings to and fro of Mr. and Mrs. R., that they had something important in hand; and when Mrs. R. no longer paid her customary visits to the seed tray, and her faithful spouse took food to the burrow for her sustenance, there was no longer any doubt as to the hen having gone to nest. Unfortunately for my readers, the nesting place was in such a position as to defy the most inquisitive, but when, at the end of three weeks, certain white egg shells, neatly cut in half, were found upon the aviary floor, it was made clear that good results had attended the efforts of this happy pair, and their owner was greatly exercised in mind because of his inability to see how matters progressed. Presently a rotten egg was ejected from the nest, and as time went on Mrs. R. made frequent and rapid visits to the seed tray, evidently with a view to assist in the labours of feeding a numerous and hungry family. It was not until quite six weeks after the hatching that a glimpse of the youngsters was obtained, and then, tempted by a brilliant June sunshine, they all emerged and ranged themselves in single file as if for inspection. Ah! they were five beauties, notwithstanding that their nest feathers were brown and dingy, and that they all looked as like each other as peas in a pod. How they blinked and dozed in the warmth of a morning sun, and how proud the happy old cock was as he incessantly plied them with tit bits, it is unnecessary here to tell, nor need I attempt to describe the delight with which the owner viewed these latest additions to his stock; suffice it to say that the old pair were unremitting in their attention, and that the entire brood were successfully reared. It was not, however, until they moulted next year that the sexes could be determined, and then the red patch which gives the birds their name, was very small and indistinct. Trouble subsequently came upon the parents, for when the trees were glowing with autumn tints, and the evenings became chilly, this pair of birds was intent upon the production of a second family; but the low temperature at night produced inflammatory symptoms and egg binding in the hen, and she was found upon the floor one morning with expanded wings, powerless and prostrate, and beyond human aid. She died. Her mate hid himself in some dark

took and there remained, so quiet and gloomy in his grief that his presence in the aviary was actually forgotten. Never was such alteration seen in the habits of a bird; from being one of the most active and cheerful occupants of the place, he became shy and reserved, and it was necessary to go into the aviary and pry about amongst the upper branches to assure oneself of his existence. There he would sit, poor fellow, for hours, as motionless as the log on which he perched, and I regret to add that his unobtrusive grief was unheeded during all the dreary winter months which ensued.

With the advent of St. Valentine's anniversary, however, when fanciers of all degrees turn attention to the making of their stock, the existence of this poor lonely bird came forcibly to the mind of his owner, and a successor to the "late lamented" was obtained. No effort of my pen would do justice to the details of this introduction, and I shall not attempt it, but, for the credit of our sex, I must believe that the widower thought his beloved wife had been restored to him—he never could have wished so much affecting upon a stranger. To see him follow her from perch to perch, spreading out his wings, and with tremulous excitement proffer dainty morsels of undigested seed, which she, to his intense surprise, refused, was extremely entertaining; and when at last, the novelty of the situation having worn off, she permitted him to preen her head and neck feathers, and to nestle by her side, the supreme happiness depicted in his every movement revealed most forcibly the intensity of affection which these birds, in common with all the parrot tribe, entertain for their mates. I have been led into these details because I know that many young amateurs lack that humanizing interest in their pets, which to me is the great charm of my hobby. I would, moreover, strongly urge those who engage in the fancy to keep their birds in pairs, and to carefully note and study their habits; the results will yield a pleasure far beyond anything which the mere possession of a well stocked aviary can afford, when only kept for show.

Passing, however, to more practical details, let me say that Red Lumps will breed in hollow logs, boxes, holes made in a wall by the removal of a brick or stone and then hidden with a log, and indeed I have known them rear a brood upon a ledge beneath the eaves of the aviary roof. They make no nest, and it is astonishing how they avoid breaking the eggs when deposited, as they frequently are, upon some rough hard substance. They lay from five to six eggs, of a pure white colour, a trifle smaller than a thrush's egg, and when the first brood is hatched early in the season, a second may not unfrequently be obtained before the nights get chilly.

FOOD. — Give canary, millet, hemp, oats, greenmeal of all kinds, and sup.

DISEASES. — Egg-binding and fits are the two chief sources of danger and the treatment for these has already been given.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MANY-COLOURED PARRAKEET

*Psaphotus Multicolor* (Gould).

It is when treating of such birds as the variety above named that one feels the inadequacy of black and white pictures to convey even a faint idea of the many varied and beautiful tints which adorn the plumage of these parakeets, and I greatly fear that no pen-and-ink description of which I am capable will supply the deficiency and do justice to the exquisite hues which adorn these beautiful members of the feathered tribe.

The Many-Coloured is a native of Australia, and is closely allied to the "Beautiful," forming a connecting link between that bird and the Red Ramp, and, indeed, the close relationship of these Australian grass parakeets, and their respective places in the order of genera are so clearly apparent as to be very remarkable, for in no other large class of birds is it so easy for the student to make the classification, and to decide without hesitation the place to which each belongs.

The male is about twelve inches long, and has a body colour of grass green, with a yellow band across the forehead, and a patch of dull chestnut red upon the poll; his wings are blue, with a streak of yellow upon the shoulder, and there are three distinct bars upon the upper part of the body, beneath the wing tips, where yellow, green, and red alternate, and, blending into each other, form a very striking combination of colour. The thighs are tinged with scarlet, as is the abdomen; and the two central tail feathers are dark blue, the outer ones merging to lilac. The hen bird is of a dingy yellowish brown colour, and bears a strong resemblance to the hen Red Ramp, for which bird the Many-Coloured hen is often sold. The distinction between these two is easily recognised by a practised eye, for the Many-Coloured hen has some indistinct spots and speckles of red and yellow about the places where such colours appear in her mate, and she is, moreover, a trifle softer feathered than birds of the other variety.

Unfortunately the birds which form the subject of this chapter are by no



MANY-COLOURED PARAKEET.

(Psephenus multicolor.)

means common in England, and this is probably due to the fact that they inhabit the interior of Australia, whilst the varieties of parakeets usually imported from the Australian colonies abound in the plains adjacent to the coast, thus admitting of quick shipment after being trapped. Another reason may also be assigned for the scarcity of the *Multicolor*, they are less gregarious than kindred varieties, and consequently require the exercise of much more time and patience from those who make a trade of catching parakeets for exportation. The scarcity of these lovely birds in England is much to be regretted, for they bear confinement well, and, both by their great beauty and hardiness, prove themselves desirable birds for outdoor aviaries. Unfortunately the hens are so much like the female Red Stamp that dealers sell them as such, the males being sold singly, at high prices, for drawing-room pets. It is therefore very difficult to obtain a pair, and I only succeeded in doing so after much trouble and many disappointments.

They are very gentle and inoffensive creatures, and offer no molestation to the weaker inmates of the aviary, but apparently delight in the society of each other, amusing themselves by playing hide-and-seek among the logs, and after an exciting chase of several minutes' duration, they will fly to their favourite perch and there exchange caresses, much after the fashion adopted by *Rudgerigaza*, and like them keeping up a musical whistle meanwhile, expressive of the pleasure derived from their amusement. They are intensely fond of bathing, and exhibit the greatest concern at being compelled to wait until their more aggressive companions have enjoyed the luxury of a freshly-filled water pan; but the *Multicolor* will, even under such conditions, console themselves by catching the sprays of water flung out upon their outspread wings, and patiently wait their chance to plunge into the tempting pool.

FOOD.—Give canary, millet, hemp and grass in seed, or other green meat, in the summer; but be careful to withhold it during moult and in very severe weather.

DISEASES.—The diseases and their treatment are the same as with the preceding parakeets.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE BEAUTIFUL OR PARADISE PARRAKEET.

*Psephotus Pulcherrimus* (Gilbert).

THIS is undoubtedly the loveliest of the parakeet tribe, combining the most vivid and varied colouring of plumage, with an extremely graceful outline, and a temperament remarkable for great gentleness of disposition and attachment, both to its mate and to those persons who win its confidence and love. It is a native of New South Wales, where it is found in the plains, feeding exclusively upon grass seeds, and resembling very closely in its habits the other varieties of the grass parakeet already described. Mr. Gilbert was the first to discover these beautiful birds, in 1846, and it is much to be regretted that their scarcity and consequent high price places them beyond the reach of all, except wealthy amateurs.

The male bird measures from ten to twelve inches in extreme length, and the ground colour is a very delicate emerald green. There is a crimson band across the forehead, fading into yellow around the eyes, and merging to an emerald green shot with turquoise blue beneath the beak and down the breast, the lower part of which is a vivid crimson colour, and this extends between the legs to the vent. The crown of the head is glossy velvet black, forming a circular cap, whilst the neck and back are a rich brown, merging into a turquoise blue as it approaches the tail. The wing feathers are pale blue, merging to green upon the outer edges, whilst a bright band of crimson upon the shoulders forms a striking contrast of colour. The base of the tail is green, fading to pale blue at the extremity, and the under tail feathers are so slightly tinged with blue as to be almost white. The feet and beak are horn colour. The hen is of an uniform lavender grey colour beneath, merging to olive brown upon the back, and, save in elegance of shape, she is utterly unlike her gay-plumaged mate. It is worthy of note that Gould has solemnly recorded the statement that both sexes of the Beautiful parakeet are alike in plumage!

In England these birds are sold by dealers as Paradise Parakeets, but



THE BEAUTIFUL OR PARADISE PARAKEET.

(*Pezoparus pulcherrimus*.)

so little appears to have been known of the breed until late years that no authors who have mentioned the variety in their writings knew enough of it from personal observation to attempt any variation of the original classification and name assigned to it by Gilbert, who only secured a single specimen, and that a male.

The beauty and docility of these birds specially recommend them as cage pets, and, although they do well in an outdoor aviary during the summer months, yet they appear to suffer from excessive cold, and cannot stand our winter in the open air. I have, however, never experienced any bad results from keeping them loose in an indoor aviary without artificial heat, and it is only under such conditions that the amateur can hope to induce them to breed. They are very lively when at liberty, exhibiting all that intense curiosity and desire to explore every cranny in their home, which is so distinctively the habit of grass parakeets, and which peculiarity results in the frequent escape of the smaller varieties by means of unexamined loopholes and small apertures, through which they possess a marvellous ability to squeeze themselves.

Like all the other grass parakeets, these birds breed in hollow trees; but they lack the power to burrow which smaller varieties of the same family possess. The hen lays from four to six white eggs, of a very slender shape, and about the size of a common sparrow's. Twenty-one days are occupied in incubation, and the nest feathers of the young are a uniform lavender grey, the males being easily distinguished by the lightness of the feathers upon their breast and abdomen. The breeding season ranges from March to July, but only one brood is produced each year.

**FOOD AND DISEASES.**—Although the "Paradise" is both lovely to the eye and affectionate to its owner, yet I would not recommend inexperienced amateurs to make trial of this variety with a view to their reproduction, unless they are prepared to risk the loss of their costly specimens against the remote possibility of success attending the experiment. The fact is, that these birds require skilful management, and, in the absence of the most watchful care, they have a nasty habit of "shuffling off this mortal coil" without giving any previous intimation of their intention so to do; and, in fact, I know of no other variety of the parakeet tribe that will die upon such short notice and insufficient grounds. These birds simply sit moping until they drop dead from sheer exhaustion. The symptoms exhibited are usually the result of constipation, and owe their origin to injudicious feeding. It must be borne in mind that the Paradise in a wild state feeds exclusively upon green seeds of flowering grass, and that such food is much more easily digested, and less heating than barley and millet. The birds will, in confinement, take to these as a matter of necessity, but they inevitably produce an irritable condition of the stomach, which impels the bird to mope and refuse food. To combat this danger is attended with no small amount of difficulty, because it so happens that our flowering field grass, if given in excess, produces diarrhoea, which is equally swift and fatal in effect. My mode of treatment consists in giving Canary,

millet, and hemp, together with scalded bread squeezed dry, as staple articles of diet, and grass in such quantities and at such intervals as a close observation of the birds suggest to be needful. In the winter the bread may be moistened with water in which green food of any kind has been boiled; but the bread must be squeezed nearly dry, and its effects carefully noted, for upon these minute observations all hopes of succeeding with the *Paradisæ* depend.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### BURKE'S PARRAKEET.

*Staphenia Bourkii* (Gould).

This is an exceptionally beautiful grass parakeet, combining as it does all the delicate markings of the *Budgerigar* upon a salmon-tinted ground colour; at once novel and strikingly handsome. So rare are these birds, that Gould never saw one during all his travels in Australia; but recently, however, importations have been made to England, and the specimens are readily sold at prices equal to 2*l.* per *oz.* weight, a pair costing 6*l.* immediately upon arrival.

They measure 10in. in extreme length, and are very slim in proportion. A band of turquoise blue extends across the forehead; the shoulders and under tail feathers are tinged with the same colour, whilst all the back and wing feathers are a greenish pink, and merge to salmon colour on the lower parts of the body, the abdomen being very richly tinted. The eyes are black, large, and prominent, and the beak and feet are light brown.

These birds are extremely quaint and gentle in their disposition, very quiet and undemonstrative in their manner, but, withal, entertaining a very strong attachment to their mates, and are seldom seen many feet away from each other even for a minute. Although evincing a considerable amount of hardness and ability to stand exposure to cold, yet I have never tested their powers of endurance in an *out-door* aviary during the winter, preferring to give them the additional comfort of a well-furnished bird room, in which are many snug corners and hollow logs, affording good quarters against keen frosty nights. The *Bourkii* are very sociable with other inmates of the aviary, and never dispute the possession of food, water, or perch with any of those saucy little ornamental finches which share the same apartment, and some of whom are ever ready to assert their claims to the best of everything with an amount of arrogance and swagger that appears very amusing in such tiny little fellows.

With proper treatment there are but few varieties of the grass parakeet which will so well repay the efforts of the amateur as the Bourkii, and looking at the fact that they are exceedingly scarce, even in their native country, and very costly in England, I venture to hope that my brother amateurs who possess the needful accommodation may be tempted to add a pair of these charming birds to their indoor collection. Whilst always speaking of them as suitable for aviaries within doors, it must be understood that I entertain no doubt of their ability to winter in the open air and that, but for the success which has resulted from my present arrangements, there would be no hesitation in transferring them to an outdoor aviary in the spring, and so affording them a fair chance of hardening off before the sun lost its power and cold nights set in. The even temperature of a room suits them admirably, and their gentle, confident disposition makes them less shy in nesting under such conditions than is usually the case with members of the Euphonia family. They are weak billed, and lack strength to burrow even into rotten logs; nor can they whittle away the woodwork of cages, as some of their reputed near relations do; so that in arranging for their reception it is necessary to provide hollow logs and other nesting places of a similar kind; a little extra expense and trouble in this direction being well repaid, for birds are strongly influenced by their surroundings, and the more complete your aviary fittings the greater will be your measure of success.

In a state of nature these birds commence to breed in the months of January and February; but our climate retards egg production until April or May, when the hen lays from two to four small white eggs, not larger than those of a *Badgerigar*. The young are covered with a pinkish down, which gives place to most feathers of a similar tinge, unrelieved by any markings; and they do not attain their adult plumage until the second moult.

**FOOD.**—Hemp, Canary and millet seeds form the staple articles of diet, and green food of all kinds may be given in moderation with advantage in the summer months, as may soaked bread, daily renewed, during the whole year.

**DISEASES.**—It is a matter of congratulation to myself that I have had no experience of the ailments of these birds, and I hope my readers will be equally fortunate. The treatment prescribed for the diseases of kindred varieties may safely be used to the *Bourkii*.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE EARL OF DERBY PARRAKEET.

*Platycercus Stanleyi* (Vigors).

*Platycercus icterotis* (Wagler).

*Psittacus icterotis* (Gould).

*Euphema rufogicta* (Godfrey).

*Goold-un-goold* [(Aborigines of West Australia).

*Small Rose Hill Parrakeet* (Colonists).

This charming little bird was first brought to the notice of English naturalists by Mr. Vigors, who named the variety after the late Earl of Derby (then Stanley), but our knowledge of the bird's characteristics has been greatly increased since those days, and I for one do not hesitate to include this species amongst the *Euphema* family of grass parakeets, to which it undoubtedly belongs.

These lovely little creatures are very plentiful alike in the lowlands and mountain districts of West Australia, where they congregate in flocks, evincing no fear of coming in contact with the haunts of man, and in fact often causing the colonist some annoyance by the invasion of his cultivated land, in search of food, in such numbers as to prove a serious injury to his fruit crops. This is particularly the case in the vicinity of Swan River, which appears to be the stronghold of these birds, for there they are as common and numerous as the sparrows of this country.

In size and shape these parakeets resemble the *Elegant*, being about Sin. or Sin. long, and slim in proportion. The male bird has a crimson head with yellow cheek patches, and the whole of the under body feathers are bright crimson, whilst the feathers of the back and wing coverts are glossy black, edged with pale green, and the principal wing feathers are sulphure blue, merging to lilac on the inner surface.

The hen may be easily distinguished by her green head and breast, slightly mottled with red, whilst her yellow cheeks are very pale, and altogether she is much less brilliant than her male, from whom she can be recognised at a glance.

This is one of the varieties which have hitherto been neglected by these

who supply the European bird market, but I sincerely hope that it may yet be imported in sufficient numbers to be placed within the reach of those fanciers whose means are limited, but whose love of the beautiful is proportionately great; for no more charming aviary pets can be found in the whole parakeet family than those which form the subject of this chapter. They are extremely active and vivacious, exhibiting the most intense affection one for the other, and keeping up an agreeable warbling note, very like that of the budgerigar, and, like those birds, exploring every nook and cranny of the room or aviary in which they are confined.

The Derby parakeet is, moreover, very hardy, and stands our winters equally as well as our own English birds, but they require, in common with all the other members of the parakeet family, a comfortable retreat in which to roost at night, where, free from draught, they nestle side by side and keep each other warm.

Although these birds are as plentiful in their native land as the sparrows in this country, yet it is an astonishing thing that, beyond an occasional pair brought home by returning colonists, we never see the Derby parakeets in England; and why such a lovely bird should have so long escaped the notice of the trappers and importers is to me very remarkable, especially as the Swan river offers an easy mode of shipment. The few individuals who are engaged in the collection and importation of Australian birds, have as yet devoted their attention principally to those varieties which abound upon the coast, leaving untouched the many beautiful and much more attractive species which are found only in the interior. The attractions of a summer in the Australian woods, and the excitement incidental to such sport as parrot and parakeet catching, ought to be sufficient to inspire a party of our young countrymen, with a love of adventure, to embark in an expedition for a few months to central Australia, where such a collection of birds may be had for the asking as would find a ready sale amongst English and Continental dealers at 5*l.* per pair, and would, moreover, well repay the services of the party. I know a man who leads a roving life of this sort, collecting and importing parrots; but his custom is to establish himself in a good locality near the birds' breeding places, and employ a couple of natives to collect nestlings. These are reared by hand until the travelling boxes are all stocked and the birds are able to feed themselves upon hard grain, when he "trips his anchor" and comes home with his spoil, realising a large profit out of the excursion.

This may be a digression, but it has an indirect bearing upon the subject-matter of this chapter, for all amateurs are interested in discussing the ways and means of obtaining such birds as the Derby, Bourkii, Beautiful, and Splendid parakeets—to say nothing of the exquisite lories—which at present are only to be obtained at enormous prices and rare intervals, and then only by dint of keeping a strict watch upon all the sources of supply.

The name given by the colonists of West Australia to the Derby parakeet originated in the fact that these birds resemble diminutive *Loxia* in

their markings and general appearance, but the resemblance does not warrant this association of the two games, for the Derby parrakeet is quite unlike the Rosella in all its habits and general characteristics, and indeed it exhibits a very close affinity to the Elegant, though somewhat stronger billed and more addicted to burrowing. The Derby parrakeet breeds in the spring, and lays from four to six eggs in the hollow spouts of gum trees.

Food—Canary and millet seed, grass and groundsel in flower, with ripe stone fruit in season; cop all the year round.

AILMENTS.—These are limited to such as have already been noticed in preceding chapters, and the treatment there prescribed should be followed.

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## CHAPTER XI.

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### THE SPLENDID GRASS PARAKEET.

*Euphonia Splendida* (Gould).

THIS is a beautiful bird, resembling in every detail of size and colour the Turquoise, except that the Splendid parakeet has a crimson throat. They are very rarely met with even in Australia, and no specimen has ever reached the hands of an English dealer, so I do not therefore propose to treat of them here, beyond giving sufficient information to enable an amateur to identify the prize should he ever meet with this bird for sale.

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In thus concluding my notice of the numerous family of grass parakeets, I do so with considerable regret, for they are very charming gentle pets, and I feel a sense that, written as my preceding chapters were, under most disadvantageous circumstances and great pressure, I have fallen lamentably short of doing justice to a subject which was worthy of more elaborate treatment than it received at my hands, and with this apology to my feathered friends, and also to my readers, I will pass on to an enumeration and description of the larger varieties of the parakeet and parrot tribe.

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COCKATIEL, OR PARAKEET COCKATOO.

(*Nymphicus Nova Hollandia.*)

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE COCKATIEL, OR PARRAKEET COCKATOO.

<i>Cockatiel</i> (Janssén).	<i>Crested Parrakeet</i> (Latham).
<i>Nymphicus Novæ Hollandiæ</i> (Wag- ler).	<i>Leucolophus auricomis</i> (Swainson).
<i>Psittacus Novæ Hollandiæ</i>	<i>Parrakeet Cockatoo</i> (Gould).
(Latham).	<i>Crested Grass Parrakeet</i> (Zoologi- cal Society Catalogue.)

These birds have the misfortune to wear a sober coloured coat, and they are consequently less esteemed by those whose eyes are charmed by brilliant exteriors, than are the more gaudy of the parrakeet tribe. In spite of their quiet colours, however, Cockatiels are great favourites with all amateurs who have tested their merits, and it is with birds, as with men, unsafe to judge them by the colour or cut of their outer garments. For hardiness, contentment, and reproductiveness, the Cockatiel has no rival amongst the foreign birds imported into this country, and I unhesitatingly recommend them to the favourable notice of my readers. Like every other variety of parrakeet they are known by various names amongst English amateurs, but I think that, being in size a parrakeet and yet possessing a cockatoo crest, they are very fitly named by the first word of the above title. That name, however, is of modern invention and it might be interesting to a man who was fond of inflicting dry "padding" upon his readers to trace the origin of the word cockatiel. I am content to accept it without question, merely remarking, by the way, that with some amateurs this bird is only known as "Joey," which is usually the first word the male birds are taught to speak plainly.

Cockatiels are natives of South Australia, but being of gregarious and migratory habits they spread themselves at various seasons of the year over the greater part of Western Australia, and are even seen occasionally in the Eastern portions. They are ground loving birds, seeking food amongst low grass, and running hither and thither for hours without

taking flight. They breed in the shallow holes of gum trees, making no nest beyond drawing together such stony chips of wood as are within reach of the hen as she sits.

Cockatiels are small eaters, considering their size. Full grown specimens are 4½ in. long, from crown to tip of tail, the birds being slender in proportion to their length, and having an extremely graceful outline and bold carriage. Being ground birds, they are somewhat longer upon the leg than the oscillators, to which family they belong, and consequently have not that "squat" appearance which is common to most of the parakeet tribe.

The sexes are easily distinguished, the head of the male being of a pale primrose yellow tint relieved by a bright red circular patch on either cheek, behind the eye, the forehead being surmounted by a slender yellow crest, which can be raised or depressed at will. The upper body and wings are ashen grey, merging to a lighter shade upon the breast, and under tail feathers. The coverts and outer wing feathers are white, forming a stripe about half an inch in width, and three inches in length.

The colours of the female are somewhat lighter than those of the male, but unlike him she has no yellow about the head, the whole being of a dark olive grey, with a slight blush upon the cheeks, which is scarcely noticeable in some specimens. The under feathers of her tail, however, are much lighter than those of the cock, and her tail is moreover prettily crossed with primrose yellow bars, the markings being somewhat like those upon the tail of a pheasant. As the head colouring varies considerably in young birds, I would recommend my readers to look to these tail markings in the hen as a confirmation of her sex, and to bear well in mind the fact that the cock has no bars in his tail. The male bird may also be distinguished by the short notes which he repeats occasionally, and resembling somewhat the whistling of a man who wishes to catch the attention of his dog. The hens never repeat this call, but they set up their crest when approached by a stranger and emit a strange sound very similar to the had language of a cat. No! I think I am wrong; cats swear first and spit afterwards. It is the latter, not the former accomplishment in which the hen Cockatiel is proficient, and I, therefore, apologise to them for the imputation upon their purity of speech. This reminds me that the male bird makes a capital talker if taken in hand when very young, but he will manage somehow to interlard or terminate all his sentences with the word which he was first taught.

A friend of mine took a young male bird of this variety from his aviary, in mid-winter, the poor little fellow being but half fledged at the time, and his neglected was-begone appearance won for him the most tender solicitation from the lady of the house. She fed and petted him until, at the end of a few weeks, he became as fat and sleek as a mole, and as the spring advanced the bird astonished his mistress by repeating the many affectionate expressions which she had lavished upon him in his infancy. I was present upon one occasion when Master "Joey" was more than

usually indignant at being kept in a back room, where he could hear the voice of his mistress without seeing her, and when at last he was admitted, his joy was unbounded. He ran through all the words in his vocabulary as if they were being done for a wager against time, and then, when the cage door was open, he flew to the shoulder of his beloved foster mother, exhibiting towards her the most ineffable affection. I never saw such intense love shown by these birds, even towards their mates, as Master "Joey" evinced upon this occasion. He spread himself out like a fan, rubbing his head upon the cheek and neck of his mistress and kissing her lips. In this latter performance, however, he always got into disgrace, by attempting to feed the object of his adoration with undigested canary seed, and when he was consigned to the cage as a punishment, his uppeping looks and slowly repeated assurances that he was "myona's own pretty little Joey" were irresistible. This bird was occasionally liberated out of doors, and he always took a rapid flight amongst some old elm trees, from the cover of which he returned, however, at the call of his mistress, flying down to her shoulder and permitting her to take him indoors. Poor "Joey," however, extended his ramble too far upon one occasion, and failed to find his way back. All efforts to trace his whereabouts proved unavailing, and two days were spent in unsuccessful search, but news reached the owner of the bird, on the third morning, that he had just been seen in a clump of elm trees about a mile from home. The information turned out to be true, and "Joey" came down like an arrow into the arms of his mistress, and it would be difficult to say which of the two was more overjoyed at the meeting. His staying away was clearly accidental, for "Joey" has always kept close at home since, and the members of the household now have a pretty sharp eye upon his movements when they let him out for a fly.

As aviary birds Cockatiels have no rivals; they breed freely, and require no more attention than would be given to pigeons. It is a very curious fact that these birds, when kept in confinement, exhibit no inclination to breed elsewhere than upon the bare ground, behind some sheltering log, and no amount of temptation, in the shape of snug retreats in hollow logs, has ever induced any of my Cockatiels to abandon their quiet corners. I have recently been at considerable pains to ascertain what other English amateurs had to say upon the subject of Cockatiel breeding, and they all confirm my own observations, and not one instance can I find of the birds nesting in hollow trees. Gould says that these birds breed in the spouts of gum trees, but this assertion was not made upon the strength of his own personal observation, and I strongly incline to the belief that it was one of the many strange things which he was "told by the natives;" and which he reproduced for the information of his countrymen. My birds breed every year upon the ground, and I shall, therefore, advise my readers to look upon that as their natural habit in confinement, and to treat them accordingly.

It is necessary to provide nesting places upon the floor of the aviary,

and the best materials for the purpose are ordinary bricks, two on edge forming the sides and one laid flat on the top. These should be placed in the quietest corner in the place, as far as possible from the door, and a couple of handfuls of dry sand is all the nest requires. The half of a brick may be laid flat at the entrance of the nesting place, to keep the sand in, and also to make the nest more private and snug. The hen lays six to nine white eggs, very similar both in size and colour to those of a dove, and the term of incubation is about twenty-one days from the laying of the first egg—the male bird not unrequently relieving his mate and taking a turn upon the eggs whilst she has a tub and enjoys some exercise. The young are naked little fellows when first hatched, but they make very rapid progress in fledging, and at the end of six weeks are quite able to manage for themselves provided there is food easy of access. As the parents will set about preparing for a second brood before the first is off their hands, and as it is no uncommon thing to get two or three nests of young from one pair of birds during the same season, it will be seen that the claim of the Cuckatiel to the favourable consideration of English amateur fanciers is a very strong one. To obtain any success with these birds in cages it would be necessary to give them plenty of space, and to let them have the cage to themselves. Of course it would be waste of time and trouble to try and breed under such conditions from newly imported specimens; they must be very tame and familiar with those about them, or your labour will be in vain. A box without a lid, and having a hole cut in one end, should be turned, bottom upwards, on the floor of the cage; the birds will soon be tempted by curiosity to inspect the interior, and ultimately to make it their nesting place. I do not recommend these birds as cage breeders, nor must those who try the experiment expect too much, for, except under favourable conditions, and with aviary bred birds, the results are very likely to prove unsatisfactory.

Where a room is available as an aviary, Cuckatiels will do admirably, and they may then be treated in the same manner as out of doors, though the additional warmth of a room, if free from draught, will produce a beneficial effect upon the progeny, especially as they are often hatched during the winter months when the ground is covered with snow. Cuckatiels bred in this country, however, adapt themselves to our seasons, and breed during the summer months, the same as our own birds, though they commence rather earlier in the spring, and prolong their nesting until later in the autumn.

If a single specimen is desired to be kept as a pet, select a cock bird for the purpose; he is much more active and amusing than the female, to say nothing of personal appearance, and learns to speak much more readily and better than a hen.

These birds being of gregarious habits, are usually very sociable when kept in aviaries with other varieties, seldom interfering with or heeding any of their companions, unless they are themselves molested, in which case they are apt to bite severely. With English bred Cuckatiels there

is nothing to fear, and you might safely trust any number of other specimens in the same room with them. They all object to be handled, and some caution in laying hold of them is necessary, or they will assuredly draw blood if they nip you. In catching a spiteful bird pin him by the neck from behind, sufficiently close up to his head to prevent him biting your finger and thumb, and whilst holding him there for protection with your right hand, carry his weight with the left, and he will be quite at your mercy. All parrots should be handled in this way, and there is no danger if you wait your chance, and lay hold smartly; hesitate, and he will bite.

Let me in conclusion add a word of caution against mice, for they played sad havoc with the nesting of my Cockatiels in the season of 1876, and spoilt about twenty eggs in the aviary of a friend before he suspected the presence of the insidious little "warmint." With birds nesting in the corners on an aviary floor the most watchful care is necessary, for in my case the mice burrowed in the earth and so got to the rear of the nest without danger to themselves from the beak of the hen bird, and they succeeded in sucking two of the eggs and spoiling seven others before I discovered what was going on. Indeed it is tolerably easy to rid yourself of these pests, or at any rate to keep them out of the bird-room, but in garden aviaries nothing but an incessant war of extermination, waged with poison and traps, will checkmate the mice, and the utmost care should be taken to prevent any seed falling on the ground, for it is this waste which attracts them.

FOOD. "Jow," although a small eater, has a predilection for canary seed. Millet, however, may be given with it in equal parts, and crushed maize will occasionally find favour with these birds, as will oats, wheat, and hemp, but the first named seed will always form the staple article of diet. Oats have a tendency to relax the birds too much, and its use in the winter is dangerous.

DISEASES.—With newly imported specimens, the hens are all subject to inflammatory symptoms, which show themselves by a puffing of the back and belly feathers, and a tremulous shiver at frequent intervals, that can be readily detected by watching the breast. Such birds ought to be rejected by intending purchasers, for recovery is always extremely doubtful. Careful nursing in a warm room, and perfect quiet, are the best remedies, but any attempt to improve matters by administering drugs will only hasten the end most dreaded. Egg binding is an occasional ailment to which these birds are subject, and it is necessary to keep a watchful eye upon hens which are supposed to be about to lay. A drooping of the wings and tail are the usual symptoms, and birds in this condition will allow themselves to be taken from the nest. Castor oil applied to the egg passage with the aid of a camel hair brush, is the best remedy, and as the ailment is strictly local, the bird will be all right again immediately after passing her egg. That egg binding is productive of intense suffering all good readers must be agreed, for the symptoms are those of this

prostration, and unless speedy relief is given death will inevitably follow. The male birds are apparently free from all the minor ailments which afflict the other members of the parakeet tribe, and with ordinary care a pair of healthy acclimatised cockatiels will live for ten or fifteen years in an outdoor aviary.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE CAROLINA PARRAKEET.

<i>Conurus Carolinensis</i> (Wilson).	<i>La Ferruche à tête jaune</i> (Buffon).
<i>Psaltriparus Carolinensis</i> (Linnaeus).	<i>Carolinische Sittich</i> (Bechstein).
Transactions).	

THESE birds are common to Mexico and to all the Southern States of America, where they always congregate in large flocks, and, luxuriating in the rich foliage of the valleys, find an abundant food supply in the cockle-burr (*Xanthium strumarium*), cypress, hackberry, and birch. By clearing off the former of these seeds they confer great benefits upon the farmers, whose sheep are sorely troubled by the accumulations of prickly burr, which become matted in their wool. All travellers agree in stating that these birds, even in their wild state, exhibit great affection towards each other, and this is shown in a remarkable degree when one of their number has been shot, the whole flock, of many hundreds, wheeling round the wounded bird, and then alighting within a few yards of the spot, notwithstanding the presence of the person who had slaughtered their companion.

Amongst the larger varieties of parakeet the Carolinas ought to take a prominent place with fanciers, and I recommend them to the favourable notice of amateurs in this country. These birds are about fifteen inches in length, slender in form, graceful in carriage, and extremely hardy in constitution. The upper body feathers of the male are rich lustrous green "shot" with blue, and merging to a yellowish tinge upon the abdomen; the head and neck being a pure orange yellow, relieved by a slight blush of red upon the cheeks and forehead. The principal flight feathers of the wing are very dark purple, the coverts being a bright yellow tinged with green. The tail is long, and somewhat forked at the end, the large upper feathers being dark green, with a rib of blue; whilst the under feathers have the same yellow tint which covers the under part of the bird's body. It requires an experienced eye to distinguish male from female in this variety of parakeet, the hen being marked exactly like her mate, though her colours are not so distinctly defined and rich in shade. Where the two sexes are indiscriminately mixed in a cage, an amateur might succeed in

picking out a pair; but then, again, he might not, and for this reason: Vast numbers of these birds are annually imported into England (I recently saw 200 loons in one room!) and the trappers mix them up regardless of age or sex. It therefore frequently happens that the young birds, which do not attain their full plumage until two years old, get drafted off as "heas," the absence of yellow-neck feathers being pointed out as conclusive evidence that the birds are females.

For an outdoor aviary, where small birds are not too numerous, the Carolina is admirably adapted, both by reason of his showy plumage and his hardy nature; and with judicious management these birds will breed freely in confinement. Their nesting-place, like that of the Budgerigar, is the hollow of a decayed tree, but they do not burrow very readily unless a sufficiently large hole already exists in the logs which have been furnished them for nesting purposes. These logs should be placed as high up in the aviary as they can be got, and the holes should be turned from the light, thus affording greater privacy to the birds, and enabling them to go in and out without being seen. Another good nesting place, which finds favour with many of these larger parakeets, is formed by taking a brick out of the aviary wall (assuming it to be 9 inches thick), and then securing a stout branch of wood, nearly covering the aperture, in such a position as to prevent the eggs or young falling out of the hole. The entrance may be enlarged by cutting out a half circular piece of the wood, and a couple of handfuls of sawdust ought to be thrown into the intended nesting place. The Carolina lays from four to six white eggs, in size and general appearance strongly resembling those of the common pigeon, and both male and female assist in the process of incubation, which extends over a period of fourteen or sixteen days.

The young remain in the nest until they are fully fledged and able to fly, and when they make their appearance one is astonished to find that they bear no resemblance to their parents, the nesting feathers being a uniform dingy green, unrelieved by any of the gay markings which distinguish the old birds. These nest feathers, however, give place to a second suit of much brighter hue at the end of twelve or thirteen weeks, but there is no semblance of yellow until the birds reach their second season's moult, when they don their wedding garments and turn their attention to nesting on their own account.

Their breeding season varies considerably in this country, some commencing as early as February, while others defer matters until September. In the former case it is usual for the birds to produce two or even three hatches of eggs during the season, but very little good results need be expected where the nesting is begun in the autumn. It is only now and then that a pair of imported birds of this variety can be induced to breed, and the same applies to nearly all the other varieties; but a little perseverance will eventually ensure success, and I have often succeeded by changing the male bird, after prolonged expectation and repeated disappointments.

In recommending these birds to my fellow fanciers it is only right to add

a word of caution against the possible consequences of turning Carolinas into a small aviary, already over-stocked with small and defenceless birds. The results would be unsatisfactory, both to the small varieties and also to the Carolina, for these latter require plenty of room, and they, moreover, show no mercy to other birds which disturb their arrangements or comfort. There are two classes of foreign birds, the large and small, and in stocking an aviary the owner should first decide which of the two classes he will keep. If the larger varieties are selected and I give them the preference out of doors—then my old friends the Carolinas ought certainly to be included in the collection, for they will always elicit outspoken admiration from visitors, and they are, moreover, profitable birds, as a good pair will amply repay their keep by the prolific reproduction of their species.

They have much to recommend them, too, as cage pets, but they ought always to be kept in pairs. Their affection one for the other is extremely interesting, and gentle treatment at the hands of their owner will quickly win their confidence and love.

As a talker, however, the Carolina has little to boast of, the utmost limit of his ability as a linguist being to repeat the name of "Poll," and even this is an accomplishment to which few specimens attain. A pair of young Carolinas will become exceedingly attached to the person of their owner, permitting themselves to be handled, and climbing about his body, evincing the greatest pleasure at the caresses bestowed upon them. I have never known an instance of their breeding in cages, nor do I think it probable that they would do so even under the most favourable circumstances. I have seen a remarkable proof of the intense affection entertained by these birds towards each other. A pair had been kept by me as cage pets all through the winter, and in the spring the hen was seized with paralysis of the feet and legs, losing all use of them. The solicitude of the male bird for his afflicted mate was quite distressing; he croached by her side, repeating his discordant call note at short intervals; then starting up he would restlessly perambulate the cage, returning with food, which he pressed upon his sick wife, vainly endeavouring to get her from the floor to the perch. His unceasing attention appeared to interfere with his wife's chances of recovery, whilst his noise made the house uninhabitable, so I ruthlessly separated the pair. All the grief which I had ever seen or heard in birds was as nothing compared with that shown by these Carolinas, the sick hen being loud and long in her lamentations, whilst her mate beat himself frantically against the bars of his cage and screamed incessantly. There was no help for it, he had to be restored to the sick chamber, and to his credit be it recorded that he roosted on the bottom of the cage and covered his afflicted better half with his wings, as a hen would nestle her chicken. Later on, when she regained sufficient strength to use one foot in climbing, he assisted her by stretching his wing over and holding her up with it as she took a fresh grip with her beak. She roosted at night clinging to the wires of the cage, and her faithful mate never left her side for an hour.

**FOOD.**—Notwithstanding that the Carolina parakeets are green seed eaters when enjoying their freedom, they show a decided preference for crushed maize when kept in captivity, and this forms their staple article of diet. Hemp is also appreciated by them, and I recommend its use, never having seen any injurious effects from this highly nutritious though much abused seed. Cabbage leaves, lettuce, and indeed any kind of green meat, will find favour with the Carolina, and a constant supply is indispensable to the maintenance of health. Beech nuts, cypress berries, green fir cones, and any and every species of nut or conifer fruit are luxuries which my yellow-headed friends enjoy, although, as I said before, they will do well upon maize and hemp, and require no pampering, being coarse feeders. Soaked bread, mixed with crushed hemp may be given with advantage when there are young in the nest, if the parent will only use it; they cannot always be induced to do so. A saucer containing common coarse salt may be kept in the aviary for these birds; they have an inordinate love for it, and its effects are highly beneficial. In their wild state they drink large quantities of salt water, always frequenting the neighbourhood of salt springs, and apparently preferring the saline liquid to that furnished by the fresh water rivers and streams which abound in North America.

**DISEASES.**—My remarks upon the diseases of *Budgerigars* are equally applicable to Carolina, except that this latter variety when kept in an aviary seldom suffer from anything but egg binding; and the remedy for that has already been fully described. Caged specimens are subject to fits, the results of over-feeding and insufficient exercise, and this should be guarded against by allowing the birds as much liberty as can possibly be afforded them.



ROSE HILL, OR ROSELLA PARAKEET

(*Ptilinopus Eudamias*.)

25/1/18

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE ROSE HILL, OR ROSELLA PARRAKEET.

*Patitacus capitatus* (London Zoological Society).

*Platycercus eximius* (Linnean Society).

*Rose Hill Parrakeet* (Colonists of New South Wales).

*Nonparis Porrot* (Latham).

*Rosella Parrakeet* (Jamaica and other English dealers).

THIS is one of the gayest-coloured and hardiest of the large parakeets imported from New South Wales, and, as the birds are very plentiful and easily trapped, great numbers find their way annually into England, where, as outdoor aviary pets, they stand our climate well, and, by their bright plumage, form attractive objects in a collection.

The adult Rosella measures from thirteen to fourteen inches in extreme length, and the illustration affords a very accurate idea of the shape and proportions of the specimen from which the picture was drawn, though it conveys an impression that the bird is of a stolid disposition, whereas there are no other parakeets of its size so sportive and vivacious in an aviary as is the Rosella. I use this name, because it is the one most familiar to English amateurs, although "Rose Hill" was the original title assigned to the variety, by reason of its attachment to a locality of that name.

The head of the Rosella is lustrous red, throat white, breast red, merging to greenish yellow on the lower portion of the abdomen, and thence shading into crimson again beneath the tail. The back feathers and wing coverts are exceptionally rich in colour, the centre of each feather being "beetle green," whilst the edges are fringed with a well-defined lining of bright lemon yellow. The centre tail feathers are dark green, and the rest shade off on either side to a beautiful lilac blue, the extremity of the tail being much lighter than its base. The shoulders have also a fringing of lilac blue, but the wing feathers are marked similarly to those upon the back. As the plumage of the male and female is identical, and

the latter suffer most from the effects of climatic change, it is extremely difficult to obtain a pair; and this fact will explain, in great measure, the want of success which has attended the efforts of those amateurs who have tried to breed Rosellas in confinement. The study of the two sexes has always perplexed me, and, although I have by incessant application educated my eye to readily detect the one from the other, yet the acquisition is one which it is not in my power to impart satisfactorily, the means of identification being limited to a less brilliant colouring of the female in some instances, and a certain indefinable feminine "expression," which must of necessity be wholly lost upon those persons who have not made the parrot tribe their study. The cock bird has, however, a peculiar tone, and this, with a little attention, may be detected from the whistle of the hen, though both repeat the same agreeable notes. This similarity of the sexes is a great drawback to the popularity of Rosellas for breeding purposes; and, as a proof of the difficulty encountered by those amateurs who attempt the reproduction of these birds, I may mention the fact that three enthusiastic fanciers of my acquaintance have each devoted two seasons to the endeavour to obtain hen Rosellas; but all their "pairs" have proved to be male specimens, notwithstanding the assurances of respectable dealers to the contrary. Not that I would be too severe upon the dealers for their mistake; such measure, for the most part, deficient of anything like an intimate knowledge of the "goods" which they sell, and, beyond separating each variety and defining its market value, the dealers have no more claim to be considered naturalists than the man who spends their Sunday mornings in the suburbs of London "pegging" for chaffinches.

Having advised my readers of the chief obstacle in the way of Rosella breeding, let me ask them not to be discouraged by disappointment, or to be deterred by the prospect of it, for "fortune favours the brave," and when once you succeed in getting a pair of Rosellas the reward of your perseverance will be ample to atone for all past shortcomings. These birds are not easily pleased with a nesting place, and, although in their wild state they breed in hollow trees, yet in confinement they will often choose some quiet ledge beneath the roof, or burrow into bundles of brushwood, making no nest beyond that formed by the chips whittled away in the process of fashioning the retreat according to their own ideas of what a nest ought to be like. I have never known an instance of their burrowing in logs, though they will sometimes take possession of an exceptionally tempting one, and enlarge an aperture to the size of a quart basin, in which to carry out the reproduction of their species. The hen lays an average of seven eggs to a batch, and, although some writers who base their statements upon hearsay credit these birds with the production of ten eggs, yet I doubt the accuracy of the information. Like the rest of the Australian species, the Rosellas, if warmly housed, will exhibit signs of nesting about Christmas time; and it is at this season of the year that the sexes are easily determined, for if you have a "pair" of males,

they will wrangle continually, keeping up an incessant whistling, chasing each other hither and thither, and generally making nuisances of themselves to all the other inmates of the aviary. If, however, the Rosellas are really paired, the happy couple are too much absorbed in their own billing and cooing to interfere with any one else, and the male is exceedingly gallant to his mate at this period, reminding one by his behaviour somewhat of the adoration exhibited by pigeons one for the other. The male Rosella bows his head up and down, rolling it alternately to and fro, before the hen, spreading out his resplendent tail like a fan, and drooping his wings to show their exquisite tints, the result of all these antics being that his mate, charmed by the compliment and the splendour of her admirer's plumes deigns to accept from his beak the proffered particle of undigested seed which he has prepared for her delectation. Then will she "nudge" him in a manner which suggests an admonition that he should not continue to make a donkey of himself, and the happy pair will thereupon doze quietly side by side for a time. When the laying commences Mr. R. becomes particularly active, and, to judge from the absurd energy with which he rushes about in search of imaginary articles, and reforms in hot haste to see how matters progress with Mrs. R., you would almost imagine that he was the most important person in the proceedings, and that he was doing more outside the nest than was Mrs. R. within towards bringing forth the tenants of those spotless white eggs which she so jealously covers.

The period of incubation extends over twenty days from the laying of the first egg, and the young when hatched are thickly covered with yellow down, which gives place rapidly to feathers identical in marking with those of the parent birds. This is annoying; for except by the superior size and vigour of the young ones, they cannot be distinguished from the females; and even size is not, as most bird breeders know, an infallible guide to the sex of nestlings. The young Rosellas leave their birthplace when fully fledged, and do not return to it again, being able in a few days after making their appearance outside to feed themselves without assistance from their parents. When hatched very early in the season, in outdoor aviaries, it is desirable to catch up the youngsters and transfer them to a slight cage in the house; indeed, this applies to all young parakeets, for they are much too tender to bear the frosts which usually come with night, even when the spring is well advanced. Apart from the protection afforded indoors to the "squeakers," and the benefits arising from constant supervision, the birds become tame and tractable, and are consequently a source of much greater pleasure to the owner than would be the case were they permitted to grow up in a semi-wild state in an aviary. When the summer is well advanced, however, the pick of the young stock may be turned out again, and the surplus birds will find a ready sale at remunerative prices.

FOOD.—As this has much to do with success, care must be taken to afford an abundant and varied supply both of seed and soft food as well as green meat. In their wild state Rosellas feed upon grass seeds, very much the

same as the smaller parakeets, except that Rosellas are reputed to have a more decided taste for insects, and to gratify it by feeding upon larvae and grubs. In confinement it is necessary to furnish during the breeding season a saucer of soap, to which may be added with marked advantage some well-crushed hard-boiled egg; indeed, the use of soft food in an aviary, though it entails a little additional labour, is a sure preventive of the filth to which all the parrot family are liable. By soft food I mean "sop," the constituent parts of which we, most of us, become acquainted with at a very early age. The seeds finding favour with Rosellas are hemp, canary, millet, oats, and crushed maize, whilst a bundle of green meat will always be an acceptable addition to the bill of fare, although it is seldom that these birds will either eat green food or bathe themselves in a cage. The cause of the disregard both of green meat and water exhibited by caged parakeets has always been a source of speculation in my mind, and, except upon the theory that they sulk when kept under such conditions, I am unable to account for this peculiar taste in their character. Some Budgerigars were kept by me in an aviary cage devoted exclusively to their use and they were constantly under my observation for six months, including the whole of the summer; but never in one instance did they make any attempt to wash themselves. When subsequently turned loose into an aviary they were always the first to descend for a morning tub after the bath had been replenished. I ought, perhaps, to say that the peculiarity above referred to is apparent only amongst imported specimens, and has not been noticed by me in aviary-bred birds. I have heard of an instance of imported birds washing when kept in a cage, but such a case has not come under my personal notice.

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## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MORETON BAY ROSELLA.

*Platyercus palliceps* (Lear). | *Mealy Rosella* (Gedney).  
*Moreton Bay Rosella* (Gould). |

THESE birds are the counterpart of the Rosella proper, both in size and markings, but the plumage of the mealy bird, as its name implies, is remarkably pale in all its colouring. The head is a faint primrose yellow, becoming white upon the throat, and merging to pale crimson upon the breast and abdomen. The back feathers have black centres and edgings of light olive green, whilst at the base of the tail, beneath the wing tips, there is a patch of very light blue, and this is also the colour of the tail itself, the outer feathers merging to pale lilac; the wings are a lovely blue. The hen may be distinguished by an absence of the blue patch at the base of her tail; the colour in her case being light green; in other respects the sexes greatly resemble each other.

The birds are natives of New South Wales, but the species is by no means plentiful; and as specimens are seldom met with in England, I do not propose to add anything to the above description, which will enable an amateur to identify the birds if he desires to do so.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### PENNANT'S PARRAKEET.

<i>Platycercus Pennantii</i> (Gould).	Pennantian Parrot (White and Shaw).
<i>Psittacus Pennantii</i> (Latham)	
<i>Psittacus gloriosus</i> (Shaw).	<i>Dulang and Julang</i> (Aborigines of New South Wales).
<i>Platicercus Pennantii</i> , (Gray).	
<i>Perrocha à large queue</i> (Le Vaillant).	

THESE lovely birds are greatly esteemed as cage pets, their disposition being naturally confiding and gentle, whilst the brilliancy of their plumage ensures them a large amount of admiration. They are natives of New South Wales, where berries, grass seeds, and grubs form their ordinary diet, and they breed during the months of September, October, and November. Hollow trees are favourite nesting places with these birds, and they lay from five to seven white eggs about the size of a small pigeon's. The Pennant measures fifteen inches in total length, the head and body feathers are of a brilliant uniform ruby red, the throat being encircled by a crescent-shaped patch of turquoise blue, whilst the back feathers are beautifully laced with an edging of crimson and centres of velvet black. The outer edges of the wings and tail are light blue, whilst the two centre tail feathers are green at the base, merging to blue at the tip. The beak is horn coloured, and the feet are almost black. Eye black, and full of intelligent expression.

The inability to recognise any outward distinction in the sexes of these birds has deterred many amateurs from attempting to breed them in captivity, and this is the more to be regretted, because the contented disposition of the birds and the attachment shown by them towards their owner, admirably adapts them for aviary breeding, whilst their hardy constitutions enable them to bear the rigours of our variable climate without injury. Beyond an almost imperceptibly lighter shade upon the breast of the adult hen, and a somewhat smaller and more effeminate head, there is absolutely no means by which an inexperienced person could



PENNANT'S PARRAKEET.

(*Psittacus Pennantii*.)

determine the sexes, but to the practised eye there is an indescribable distinction in the manner as well as appearance which enables one to pick out a hen with tolerable accuracy; but this intuitive knowledge must be gained by practical experience, for it cannot be imparted by any pen and ink-production of which I am capable.

The Pennants do not attain their full plumage until the second moult, and up to that period they are mottled with brown upon the breast and very rusty upon the back; they are then frequently sold as hens. I once possessed a very lovely bird of this variety, and he was an universal pet, permitting himself to be handled and danced by anyone he knew, and climbing up by their clothes, he delighted whilst kissing and being caressed, to make playful snaps at your face and hands, distending his wings and tail meanwhile, and evincing great enjoyment at the fun. He would not bite, unless actually hurt or roughly handled, as was sometimes the case when restoring him unceremoniously to the cage; but even then his bite was never sufficiently severe to draw blood; indeed, this bird is very weak-billed considering its size. Unfortunately, they lack the power of speech; but for that defect they would deserve to be ranked as the most desirable cage pets of the parrot tribe; and those of my readers who desire to possess a bird of surpassing beauty, and whilst bringing it to perfect obedience to win its confidence and love, let them obtain a Pennant parakeet which has not attained its adult plumage, and they will, according to my experience, find in him a cheerful companion, as gentle as he is intelligent.

Unfortunately these birds are always scarce in England, and they are consequently expensive, the dealers themselves not infrequently paying 20s. each when taking a number of them, and running all those risks which inevitably attach to newly-imported stock.

For brooding purposes it is desirable to obtain young specimens, to bestow considerable care upon their diet, and to give them freedom either in a room or an outdoor aviary; the former is preferable, if the place is suitably fitted, as it enables a more intimate acquaintance to be cultivated between the birds and their owner. In this country the Pennant parakeets usually exhibit a desire to nest about the end of June or the beginning of July, when they become unusually lively, and devote themselves to the exploration of every spot that appears to offer the requisite comfort and security for the reception of eggs, this restlessness being accompanied by a monotonous whistling on the part of the male bird, who appears to exercise a considerable amount of authority in the choice of a house. When, after many changes, a nesting-place is finally selected, it will usually be found near the ground, and not infrequently a chaise or Cockatoo's nest upon the floor itself will be taken possession of by the cock Pennant, who, ensconcing himself in the retreat, calls incessantly to his mate to follow. If these invitations are disregarded, then he will eventually come out and discuss the matter with her, the two chattering together and feeding each other like *Budgerigars*, until finally

Mr. P., by dint of persuasion and sometimes force, compels his mate to make trial of the new abode. For two or three days preceding the laying of the first egg the hen becomes very dull and moody, sitting at the entrance of the nest and dozing, her feathers being slightly puffed; but these symptoms must not be mistaken for egg-binding; where that is the case, a drooping of the wings and other prostration are always apparent. It will contribute greatly to success if, at the earliest indications of a desire to nest, you add to the sop, with which these birds should be regularly supplied, a small quantity of meat dripping—which must be free from all salt—about the size of a nut, incorporating it well with a saucer full of scalded bread.

The period of incubation will be found to vary from twenty to twenty-five days, according to the order in which the eggs were laid and the number of the hatch, but there is nothing to be gained by the gratification of one's curiosity as to the precise hour at which the birds are hatched, and I would strongly urge breeders not to disturb the parents at this critical period. The nest down of the young is of a bright fawn colour, giving place to a suit of rusty brown feathers, uncoloured by any shade save a darker tinge upon the back; and it must be admitted that these baby parakeets are not at all pretty, though they are very quaint. Their growth, too, is as slow as the development of their gay adult plumage, for they do not attain their full size until quite eighteen months or even longer have elapsed; a six months old Pennant being no larger than a small Rosella. This slow development of the larger species of parakeet and parrot is very peculiar, and I have looked in vain for any information upon the subject from those pretentious ornithological works, where one would expect to find reference to such an important detail. At first I was disposed to attribute slow growth to the coldness of our climate, but subsequent observation has satisfied me that such is not the case, and I have been led to the conclusion that rapid development in birds of the parrot tribe is only seen in the short lived varieties, whilst slow growth and longevity are inseparably connected.

Although not equal in that respect to some of the larger species, the Pennant will live a great number of years in confinement, and I class these birds as amongst the hardiest which Australia produces. Before closing my remarks upon their merits as aviary and cage pets, let me pay a tribute to their amiability towards other birds, none of which, however weak and defenceless, will suffer molestation or injury from the Pennant parakeet, except in self defence, so that they may safely be kept with small birds flying loose in the same bird room.

FOOD.—Give hemp, canary, millet, oats, and nuts of all kinds, whilst a saucer of sop is also necessary to the maintenance of good health. Fruit and green food may be given regularly in the summer, but must be withheld at the moulting period, and also during the winter. It may be well to caution my readers against the very common practice of giving a liberal supply of green food to newly imported specimens; they surfeit them-

selves and inevitably fall into moult. Such birds, having been so long deprived of the luxury, feast to repletion if they are afforded the opportunity; but this must also be guarded against, the green food being very gradually added to the regular diet.

ERASMAS.—Fits are the greatest source of danger to caged specimens of the Pennant parakeet, but sopped bread is the only preventive, and the mode of treatment has already been prescribed. The moulting is usually very well over before the cold weather sets in; but in cases of late or protracted moult, if the nights are cold, it is always wise to catch up the birds, if kept in an out-door aviary, and transfer them to the house, for although the Australian birds will stand any amount of cold when in good health, yet the feverish condition of the body during the period of moult renders these birds very liable to inflammation of the lungs, which invariably proves fatal.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

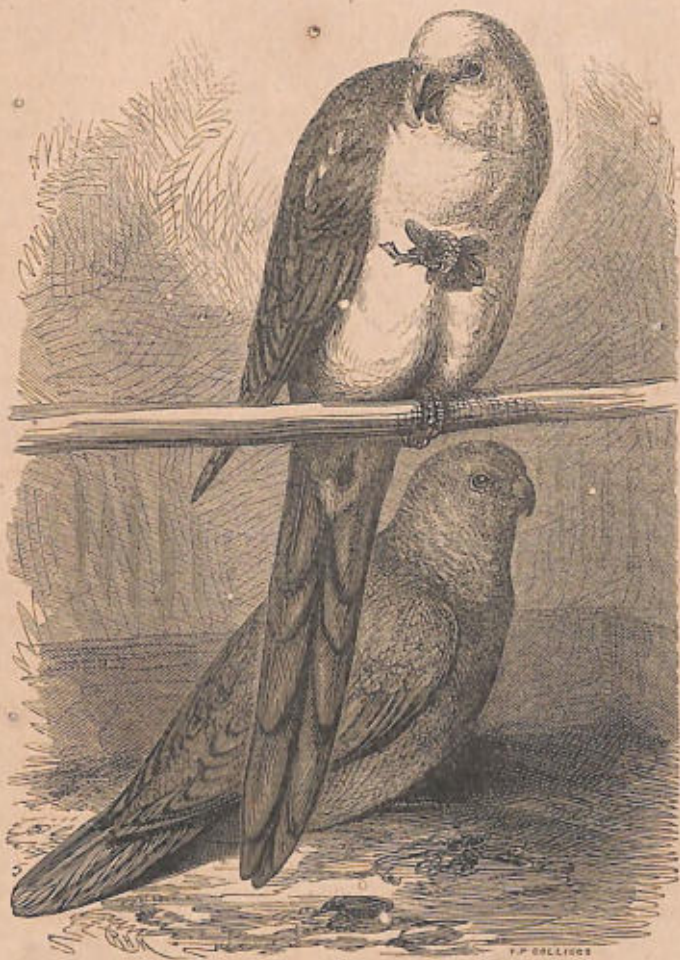
### THE KING AND QUEEN PARROT.

<i>Platycercus scapulatus</i> (Linnæus Society).	<i>La grand Perruche</i> (Paris Zoological Society).
<i>Aprosmictus scapularis</i> (Gould).	<i>Scarlet and Green Parrot</i> (Latham).
<i>Psittacus scapulatus</i> (Bechstein).	<i>Tahitian Parrot</i> (White's Journals).
<i>Psittacus Tabuensis</i> (Latham).	<i>Wellat</i> (Aborigines of New South Wales).
<i>Platycercus scapularis</i> (Swainson).	

FOR those amateurs who have a predilection for the larger varieties of aviary birds, I commend those which form the subject of this chapter, as being very handsome in plumage, docile in nature, hardy in constitution, and tolerably easy to breed in confinement. Success in foreign bird breeding is always largely dependent upon the use of suitable food, and in the case of King Parrots, their natural diet is so simple that it can be continued here without difficulty.

These birds are almost exclusively confined to New South Wales, where they are very shy and not easily trapped; hiding for the most part in densely wooded districts during a great portion of the year and feeding upon seeds and berries. It is at the season when the Indian corn is ripening that these grand Kings and Queens fall victims to the trappers' snares, for the birds have an inordinate love of maize, and they come down to the fields in flocks, doing an immense amount of damage. In spite of their numbers, however, they are very wary, and it is chiefly the young birds that get caught, and not many of them, the consequence being that they always command a good price in this country.

The King measures some sixteen or eighteen inches long, and is gracefully proportioned, his tail being broader and fuller than that of any of the birds previously treated of here. His head, neck, and all the lower surface of the body, is a bright crimson, whilst his back and wings are sage green. The portion covered by his wing tips is a deep blue, as are the upper tail coverts, whilst the tail itself is bluish black, and his beak bright red.



THE KING AND QUEEN PARROT.

(*Platycercus scapularis*.)

The female is much less showy than her mate, her head and all the upper body feathers being green, whilst the breast has a slight tinge of red merging to scarlet lower down upon the abdomen and under the coverts. The tail is of a much lighter shade than that of the cock, but the feathers are of the same peculiar bluish-black mixture.

The fact of amateurs being able to obtain genuine young birds of this variety, and the ready means of distinguishing the sexes, makes them especially valuable for aviary purposes; but it is always desirable to obtain specimens as soon after importation as possible, because birds in their nest feathers do not realise so much money as those in full plumage; but a forced moult is produced—to the permanent injury of the bird and the profit of the dealer—by a process called amongst the Whitechapel bird catchers “back stopping.” This iniquitous process was known and practised in older times, the object of a forced moult amongst birds used for trapping being to induce song at a period when they would otherwise be mute. I have before me a quaint old bird book, 150 years old, in which the author devotes a chapter to this subject, and says, “The stopping of a bird is of great use to the bird catchers, but before you stop him you must keep him in a back cage until he is able to find his victuals in the dark. Have a cage made fit for the purpose of a stop, then put in your birds (in cages), and leave the door open till you are satisfied they have found their meat and water: then darken them by degrees till they are quite dark, and cover them with a blanket, or any thick cloth that is warm, keeping them very hot. You may look at them once in three days, but it is best not to clean their cages, as the hotness of the manure forces them to moult. Let them continue in this close stop for three months, by which time they will be clean moulted off; then open them a little by degrees,” &c.

I have quoted this at some length, for the barbarous practice of back stopping is still carried on in the most barefaced manner, as is the “blearing” of birds’ eyes with hotirons to make them sing in all weathers, and if the quotation has the effect of directing the attention of those who should endeavour to stamp out these infamous practices, my bird-loving readers will assuredly pardon the digression.

Of course it would be impossible to practise this refined cruelty in obtaining a forced moult amongst members of the parrot tribe, but it is accomplished by stacking the birds in cages upon shelves close to the ceiling, where the heat of the gas produces the desired effect of hastening the moult of such birds as King and Queen Parrots, who would not otherwise attain full plumage until their second year. I have already been accused of being too severe upon dealers, and have been reminded of the very risky nature of their business, as well as the heavy losses to which they are subject; but it appears to me that I should ill requite all that pleasure which my birds afford me if I were to leave unaided anything which is calculated to alleviate the horrors of their early captivity; and I would also here remark that the abuses and deceptions which I have sought to expose are all carried on at the cost of great suffering to the poor

birds, and are moreover prompted by the base desire of gain on the part of those who perpetrate them. This may be distasteful, but it is perfectly true.

Where it is desired to induce King Parrots to breed, they should be allowed perfect quiet and freedom from intrusion, and it is also desirable to restrict the number of inmates of the aviary as much as possible, selecting birds of kindred varieties that are not likely to interfere with the nesting arrangements of their neighbours. King Parrots are naturally shy, and although they may become very tame in cages, yet a very short liberty in a room or outdoor aviary is sufficient to induce a return of their natural timidity, and, as a consequence, better results are obtained in a commodious garden aviary than in a room, unless it is very well fitted for the purpose, and affords such isolated places of retreat as will give the birds a sense of security. It is an excellent plan, where a room is used, to have a temporary door made of galvanised wire netting, stretched on a light frame, and fitted with hinges and a lock, which said door should open in the opposite direction to the door proper. This enables you to see what is going on without disturbing the birds, and it, moreover, accustoms them to your presence, and does away with the fright resulting from your sudden appearance when opening an ordinary door and walking into the room. It is upon these apparently insignificant details that so much depends, and those who ignore them need expect nothing but "trouble for their satisfaction," as my Irish friend would say.

In advising this selection of suitable companions for the Kings, I ought to add that they are naturally of a quiet and inactive disposition, and that, therefore, the restless, inquisitive grass parakeets would prove an insufferable nuisance to them, as would noisy song birds, so that your choice should lay with Cuckatiels, Rose Cuckatoos, and small Sulphur-crested Cuckatoos, and if limited to a pair of each variety the results ought to prove alike satisfactory and remunerative. None of these birds require artificial food, and, indeed, I am strongly opposed to its use for any of the Australian birds, although I am fain to admit that there is a wide field open for the breeding of Japanese, African, Indian, and tropical American birds to anyone who possesses the taste and means to gratify this fascinating pursuit; but those who cannot afford costly aviaries and elaborate heating apparatus may console themselves with the knowledge that a very large number of comparatively rare and exceedingly beautiful birds will, with ordinary care and attention from their owners, breed freely without any of those expensive appliances.

The King and Queen commence their nesting arrangements in January or February; or if the season is a very cold one, or the birds are young, it may be delayed until the warm weather approaches; and the hen lays from two to four white eggs in a hollow log near the ground. The period of incubation is about three weeks from the disappearance of the queen; although upon this point I am not quite certain, because the shy nature of the birds prevents a close inspection. The nest feathers of the young

are a dingy sage green, and this they retain until two years old, up to which period the sexes are indistinguishable, except by the more aggressive behaviour of the male birds, who don their wedding garments with the second moult, and set up as householders on their own account very shortly after.

As cage pets the King and Queen have much to commend them, being gentle and confiding to their owner, and of a remarkably quiet nature, their ordinary note being of a soft and pleasing nature, but even this whistling is not frequently indulged. These birds are exceedingly fond of bathing, and in affording cage specimens this luxury during the winter, care should be taken to protect them from the cold until their plumage is dry.

I ought, perhaps, to mention that these birds are very commonly known as King Lories.

FOOD.—Give hemp, Canary, millet, and maize, nuts of every description, and soap; fruit and green food sparingly in summer, but withhold it during winter, and when young are in the nest.

DISEASES.—These birds are very hardy, except at the period of moult, when a little additional care must be taken, and should any prostration be observed through cold, do not hesitate to transfer the bird to a cage, and nurse him through the moult in a room free from draughts. Fits are not of frequent occurrence, and their treatment has already been prescribed for.

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE YELLOW COLLARED PARAKEET.

<i>Platycercus scapularis</i> (King).	<i>Douc-ara</i> (Aborigines of Australia).
<i>Psittacus semitorquatus</i> (Gould)	
Twenty-eight Parakeet (Colonists).	<i>Platycercus Bancrofti</i> (Bancroft).

THE Yellow Collared parakeets are plentiful in West Australia, and occasionally find their way into the hands of English Dealers, but the variety is not generally known amongst amateurs, nor is its exact place in the order of genera by any means clear, for whilst unlike in shape of body and colour of plumage all the other ground loving parakeets, yet it exhibits with them an equal partiality for green seeds, berries, and stone fruit. These birds are strikingly handsome, although they lack that vivid colouring which distinguishes kindred varieties, and are also more remarkable for strong contrast of dissimilar shades than any of their relatives. A full grown male measures from 14in. to 15in. in extreme length, the body being slim in proportion, and the tail very long. His head is velvet black, with a red band across the forehead, and at the nape of the neck a broad collar or tippet of pale yellow, sharply defined, forms a striking contrast to the black head and the blackish green of the bird's back, whilst the wings assume a distinctly blue tinge, which is also the colour of the tail. The beak is lead colour, whilst the breast and abdomen are light green, and the legs and feet pale brown. The markings of the hen are said to be identical with those of the male, but I am strongly inclined to the belief that the females have been classed as a distinct variety by the one ornithologist whose writings on this subject have guided others, and so perpetuated the error.

The variations of plumage in the Yellow Collared are very remarkable, for they are quite three years in attaining their full colours; and so obscure are the markings of a year-old bird that, when placed by the side of a three-year-old, one would be tempted to declare at first sight that they were different varieties. This peculiarity is, however, noticeable in all the

long-tailed species of large parakeets, and is by no means restricted to the yellow collar.

These birds are remarkably hardy and well adapted for aviary purposes, standing our climate well, but I am unable to record any instance of their breeding in confinement, although they are reputed to be very prolific, producing seven to ten eggs at a batch, whilst their breeding season occurs about August or September, thus affording time in this country for the "waxing" and hardening off of the young before the advent of frosty nights.

My experience with these birds convinces me that we must look amongst the so-called "kindred varieties" for hens, because all the birds which I have seen with yellow collars have unquestionably been of the male sex, and as this is one of the parakeets to which I intend hereafter to devote my attention, it remains to be proved whether my theory is correct, viz., that the females of this Yellow-Collared parakeet are to be found amongst the birds classed by the naturalists whose names they bear as Bauer's parakeets and Bernard's parakeets. I have long since become sceptical as to the reliability of our information with regard to Australian birds, and it is no reflection upon the abilities of those old authors to say so, because the ornithology of our colonies is so rich that the study of a lifetime was necessary to enable them to do justice to such a vast subject.

As cage pets the Yellow Collars are very active, cheerful, and affectionate, the only objectionable habit the birds possess being a tendency to whistle with some monotony a peculiar note, which sounds like "twenty-eight," and this induces the colonists to call them by that name.

FOOD.—Give all the varieties of seed previously enumerated, and in addition to seed add nuts of various kinds and a liberal supply of stone fruit when in season, and green food as a substitute at other times.

DISEASES.—As these birds moult in the spring, they escape those dangers usually attending that critical period; but they require an unusual amount of green food to keep them free from fits, and careful attention to this point will insure the continued good health of your specimens.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE RING-NECKED PARRAKEET.

*Psittacus Alexandri* (Linn),  
*Peruche à Collier couleur de rose*  
(Luffon).

Der Rosenkrohnige (Sittich, Bach-  
stein).

THREE graceful Ring-Necked birds are as popular with Englishmen of to-day as they were with the ancient Macedonians of old, who kept them in cages of carved ivory and finely wrought gold, and indeed, so great was the value and importance attached to them that they are frequently mentioned by the earliest classical writers, and the birds, moreover, bear the name of the great Emperor Alexander, so that it is no exaggeration to say that this species of parakeet comes to us with a character that has stood the test of 2000 years or more. I most readily bear testimony to the deservedly high estimation in which these birds are at present held, and also to their extreme docility and strong attachment to their owners, but in doing so I must record my preference for the smaller Indian Ring-Necked birds which form the subject of the next chapter.

The Alexandri measures some 20in. in extreme length, and the two centre tail feathers are at least 12in. long, the body is slim in proportion, and the head is large. The prevailing body colour is pea green—darker above than underneath—the soft feathers lying so closely as to present a velvety appearance, and having a bloom upon them that adds greatly to the beauty of the plumage. The edges of the shoulders are bright red, down to the spurious wing, where a patch of the same colour forms a striking contrast to the green. The beak is crimson, and the throat is circled by a black collar, which narrows towards the nape of the neck, and beneath this there is a band of brilliant red coming from the back of the neck, and fading away as it nears the gullet. The eyes of these birds are very peculiar, the pupils being rapidly dilated and contracted during excitement, and whilst listening attentively to any sound the pupil closes until it is no larger than a pin's head, but it

gradually expands again to the size of a small pea when the bird has satisfied himself that there are no grounds for alarm.

Let it be understood that my testimony to the amiability and good qualities of these birds is limited to those whose education commenced when they were young, and who had, moreover, been carefully trained and pitted, for there are many of this species that through age, neglect, or improper treatment, become nuisances of a very emphatic type. They are all somewhat nervous and extremely sensitive, and therefore require gentle treatment in order to obtain their confidence and affection. As linguists they possess considerable merit, but their education requires more continuous attention than the majority of men care to bestow upon a bird that does not learn readily. It was my miserable fate to be left in ill-health at Singapore—suffering, in fact, from that species of "lead poisoning" which was very common during the Indian mutiny—and although it was, perhaps, unreasonable of me not to "slip my cable" when such a result was expected, still I had a young Joco monkey and small Ring-Necked parrakeet (*Palaeornis torquatus*), and their presence did more towards my recovery than all the physic, lint, and lotion of old Hokus. Poor Jacko had a knotted rope suspended from the rafter; with a few coarse pieces of wood put through the strands, making perches, upon which he dozed and plotted schemes of revenge against Polly, or, it may be, meditated upon the chances of stealing her bananas out of the sand tray at the bottom of his rope ladder, without being detected in the act. Polly lying upon my shoulder, listened for hours to her lessons, her head slightly on one side, and the pupil of her eye contracting at intervals as if expressing inability to quite understand some particular portion of the task. When I ceased to pay any attention to her presence she would gently nibble my ear until the desired effect was produced. Intensely affectionate was Polly, and she would allow me to place her inside the breast of my linen jacket, where she laid perfectly content and apparently understanding that it was all in play. The great fun was to watch her and Jacko in their contests for the possession of the upper perch. Polly having taken her "biffin," was disposed for an afternoon nap, and she accordingly commenced to mount the rope ladder, but Jacko immediately set up a chatter, savagely showing his teeth meanwhile, and shaking the rope violently to impede the movements of Polly. In spite of this, up she goes steadily, hand over hand, nearer and nearer to the coveted perch, on which sits the monkey in a boiling passion and trembling with excitement. Holding on by his tail and hind legs, he now attempts to get hold of Polly, but she snaps at his hands right and left with a rapidity that is perfectly astounding, and presently a shriek of pain announces that her beak has drawn blood, and down drops poor Jacko like a stone, whilst Polly takes quiet possession of the perch, where, after repeating a few self-congratulatory notes, she dozes off as if nothing had happened. Jacko meanwhile sits upon his haunches examining the bite with a very rueful countenance; but a little petting from me sets him right, and a thorough

examination of everything eatable and drinkable having been made, he goes regularly to work to "blow the steam off." Making the rope ladder his centre, he performs a series of splendid jumps to it from all the articles of furniture in the room—much to the disgust of Polly—and then, after a headlong rush around the apartment, he bounds up the ladder like a flash of lightning, and makes a grab at Poll's tail, dropping at once to the ground to escape the consequences of this daring act. The bird, however, was never injured by him in this way, for she watched his every movement, the only time that he ever stole a march upon her was when she happened to be feeding in the sand tray, immediately beneath the rope ladder, down which her stealthy enemy slipped like a serpent, and making a snatch caught her by the base of her tail. At that moment a well directed bunch of bananas from me, bit him in the chest, and down he came, whereupon Poll seized him by the fleshy part of the lower arm and bit it through. This was a lesson which he never forgot, and although his devilment compelled him to annoy Poll, as a source of fun, still he grew to respect if he did not love her, and they certainly were the most entertaining companions that I ever possessed.

The Ring-Necked parakeets do not attain their full plumage until the third year, and previous to this the handsome ring is absent from their neck. The hens also lack this distinguishing mark, and, as a consequence, are frequently sold as young males; but my advice is, do not buy a bird without he has a ring upon his neck, no matter what may be the representations made by the person offering him for sale. These birds are very delicate when first brought to England, and the greatest care is necessary to protect them from cold, especially at night, when the cage should be enveloped in a railway rug or some such warm covering, and, above all things, do not vary the food to which the bird has been accustomed. He will soon get acclimatised, and become so hardy that he may be allowed to have the run of your house and garden, providing that he is sufficiently tame to be trusted. It all depends upon the owner whether or not a parakeet of this species becomes perfectly tame and obedient, for I have seen scores of them made pets of by soldiers in India, and the birds climbed about them and permitted themselves to be handled and played with as if they were kittens.

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THE SMALL RING-NECKED PARRAKEET.

(*Palaeornis forquatus.*)

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SMALL RING-NECKED PARRAKEET

*Falmoris torquatus.*

THESE charming birds are, as I have already stated, great favourites of mine, and it may be that my preference for them is influenced by the long continued friendship which existed between myself and poor Polly, who has been mentioned in the preceding chapter. Apart from this, however, the *Torquatus* possesses a more loving disposition, graceful outline, and delicately tinted plumage than his near relation the *Alexandri*.

The special charm about these birds is the intense affection which they exhibit towards everyone whom they "take to," and the perfect confidence with which they submit to be handled and caressed. Their upper body feathers are a brilliant pea green, the head and cheeks being particularly bright, whilst breast and abdomen are a much lighter shade of green than the back, and the under wing and tail coverts are bright primrose yellow, tinged with green. The tail is 10in. long, slender and pointed, the two central feathers being 4in. longer than the rest, and having a bluish tinge upon their upper surface. The total length of this bird is 15in. The head is small, and both mandibles of the beak are red, the beak itself being lighter and much less calculated to inspire one with the dread of a bite than is felt at the appearance of the massive beaks of the larger species. Across the base of the upper mandible a very narrow strip of black extends from eye to eye, whilst from the corners of the mouth (excuse the absence of technical language) there runs a thin fringe of black-tipped feathers, curving down towards the throat and then going off round the cheek in a half circle, passing towards the nape of the neck, and falling away when it reaches the rose-red band which extends across the back of the neck. The upper margin of this rose ring is delicately tinged with purple, but all the feathers in the ring are yellow for more than two-thirds of their length, the red, purple, and black being a mere fringe upon the outer edges. This is also the case with the head and under body feathers, and it is this thin coating of pale glossy green over the yellow

under surface which gives such delicate shadings to the plumage of these birds, and makes them so much more brilliant than the Alexandrine ring-neck. The very slight outer covering of green on the plumage of the *Torquatus* leads to startling results when these birds are bred in aviaries, as they commonly are in India, perfectly primrose yellow coloured specimens being readily obtained by selective breeding, and pink beaks and grey legs are the only variations of colour. These delicate plumaged little creatures are highly esteemed amongst wealthy natives, and we rarely see specimens in England. It is true that the Prince of Wales brought one of these gems home with him from his trip to India—indeed this was the only bird of the parrot tribe amongst his presents—and, I am sorry to say that this delicate, gentle creature has been ruthlessly consigned to that parrots' room of horrors at the Zoo, where it is placed within three feet of some half dozen of those Goliath White Coucaloes, whose terrific shrieks appal the spectators. Surely such a gentle, lovable little pet ought to have been gladly welcomed by the children of the royal household, or, at least, have found a home resplending in comfort and luxury to the Indian court whence it came. If that bird was mine I would rather have killed it than condoned it to the horrors of its present situation; and, lest it be supposed that this bird is being exhibited as a novelty, let me add that the society possesses a very fine specimen of its own.

The capacity of the Small Ring-necked parakeets is considerably greater than might be supposed, but their education is not very rapidly perfected although their memories are very retentive when once a sentence has been mastered. My "Polly," who has already been introduced to the reader, was a most accomplished linguist, and she would have talked down the most loquacious parrot that Africa ever produced, but, curiously enough, her vocabulary included no stray expressions, she only knew what she had been taught by dint of frequent repetitions, and this ensured greater purity of speech than is usually found in a sailor's parrot. Poor Polly was killed in a typhoon in the China sea; and, as the shattered spar which inflicted this irreparable loss upon me also "wiped out" a poor lad whom it struck, Polly shared his hammock as a shroud, and, with him, had her body "committed to the deep."

In recommending them to my bird-loving friends as most desirable cage pets, let me ask those who can do so to keep them in pairs; the intense affection which they exhibit towards each other being a most attractive feature in their character, whilst companionship prevents them developing that dislike of being left alone, which sometimes makes them noisy under such circumstances.

FOOD.—The food of these birds in confinement varies greatly, for some specimens will subsist entirely either upon hemp, canary, or Indian millet seed, whilst others will eat anything and everything. They are all fond of nuts, and it is very desirable to encourage the use of various articles of diet. The exclusive use of one seed frequently results in illness, so

that the introduction of mixed seed should be gradually effected, but sudden changes are extremely dangerous, and newly imported specimens would die at once if their customary food was not supplied.

DISEASES.—The ailments of the ring necked parakeets are chiefly confined to colds and fits, but acclimatized specimens become very hardy, and with freedom from draught and judicious feeding, they will live a long time in confinement and become strongly attached to those who pet them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE GREEN LEEK PARRAKEET.

<i>Psittacus barrabandi</i> (Swainson).	<i>Scarlet-breasted Parrot</i> (Latham).
<i>Palaeornis barrabandi</i> (Vigors).	<i>Palaeornis rufescens</i> (Vigors).
<i>Polytelis barrabandi</i> (Wagler).	<i>Green Leek</i> (Colonists of N. S. Wales).

These are an exceedingly graceful and strikingly handsome variety of the long-tailed parakeet tribe, but they have never prospered with me, and I am, therefore, reluctant to recommend them as aviary birds, although with the additional warmth and pampering devoted to them as cage pets, they succeed much better and always excite the admiration of visitors. There is a striking resemblance between these birds and the Indian Ring-necked parakeets, so far as size, shape, and form are concerned, but the Green Leek is far more gorgeous in his plumage, although he lacks that ready power of speech which has distinguished his Indian relative and made them from all time such favourites with their owners. In extreme length the male Green Leek measures 16in. or 17in. and his body colour is a lustrous emerald green, the principal wing and long tail feathers having a black rib down the centre and being slightly edged with blue upon their outer edges. The beak is a bright red, and from its base a circular cap of rich orange yellow covers the crown, whilst the same bright colour extends down the throat, and merges into a broad band of crimson upon the breast. The feet are slender and delicately formed, somewhat resembling those of the ground parakeets, although the general characteristics and the power of contracting and dilating the pupil of the eye clearly prove it to be a member of the *Palaeornis* family, notwithstanding that it is a native of New South Wales. The female lacks all the gay colours which distinguish her mate, and the uniform green of her coat is only relieved by a lighter shading on the abdomen, a tinge of pink upon the thighs and under tail coverts, and an orange-red beak.

I have never been able to obtain a young pair of Green Leeks in England, and it appears that only adult specimens are imported, probably because they realise better prices than young birds, which are out of colour, but I am endeavouring to get a consignment of nestlings, which are likely to suffer less than old birds from the change, and consequently to become

more readily acclimatised. As cage pets they are very much attached to their owners and to each other, and become both demonstrative and noisy in exhibiting affection; but their ability as linguists does not appear to be of a very high order, although it is scarcely a fair test to judge them by the proficiency exhibited amongst old specimens, for an aged parrot can never be taught to talk with any degree of fluency, and the same rule applies with equal force to parakeets.

Green Leeks are by no means common in their own country, and as, in addition to their scarcity, they command high prices in England, there is little probability of their being greatly sought after, except by amateurs, who, like myself, derive enjoyment from persistent efforts to obtain successful results with birds which ought to breed in this country, but which die at the very moment when your hopes appear likely to be realised! It is terribly disheartening work in a climate like ours to carry on a study of this kind with birds whose breeding season commences at Christmas; but why some varieties of the small parakeet tribe should be so much harder than their larger relatives who come from the same latitudes is a problem which has always perplexed me, and I am fain to think there is some truth in the explanation offered by an Irish friend, who said he had no doubt that the bigger the bird the more he suffered from cold, "because a large bird had more surface exposed to the atmosphere than a small one!" No doubt the smaller birds are of a more active nature than the large ones, and the little fellows warm themselves by exercise, whilst their big relations sit and shiver.

Green Leeks do not show any strong affection one for the other, nor are they particularly amiable to other occupants of the same aviary, and for this reason they should never be kept with small and defenceless birds. This advice applies to all the members of the same genus, for there is something feline and treacherous about all these birds which contract and dilate the pupil of their eyes, and no amount of tameness will prevent their being guilty of gross and wanton cruelty to little inoffensive and unsuspecting birds that get in their way, or even venture to cut from the same food tray. This peculiarity is not restricted to the parrot tribe. I have observed it in the *Icterus* and *Oriolus* tribes, which have the same peculiar motion of the eye.

The treatment of the Green Leek should be the same as that of the King-necked.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CRIMSON WING.

<i>Crimson-winged Parrot</i> (Latham).	} <i>Psittacus melanoptus</i> (Shaw).	
<i>Red-faced Green Lory</i> (Swainson).		} <i>Platyercus erythropterus</i> (Linnaeus 'Transactions).
<i>Ayresniæctus erythropterus</i> (Gould).		

Amongst the many brilliant-plumaged birds which we receive from the South-Eastern portion of Australia, the *Crimson Wing* will, as a cage pet, always hold a foremost place: for the vivid beauty of his coat and the gentleness of his nature are alike attractive, and there is something exceptionally fine in the colours of his plumage which raises him above the level of any other bird of kindred variety. Although classed as a lory, the *Crimson Wing* is not a lory proper, as his food for the main part in a wild state consists of seeds and berries, and a scaly bug which infests the gum trees; and, although it is alleged that he also partakes of the pollen from the flower of the eucalypti, still it can form but a small part of the bird's diet, and he, moreover, subsists in perfect health for many years in confinement when fed in the same manner as *grass parakeets*. I class the *Crimson Wing* as a connecting variety between the *King parrot* and the lory proper, and have found ample justification for doing so by close observation of both. The male *Crimson Wing* is twelve inches long, and somewhat thickly built, the tail being broad at the extremity. The head and all the under-body feathers are a vivid grass green, back rich velvet black; whilst the whole of the wing coverts are deep blood red. The principal wing feathers are dark green, as are also those of the tail, which is, moreover, tinged with orange at the extremity, and there is a blue patch beneath the tips of the wing. The beak is red, and the feet are light brown. The hen is less brilliantly coloured, her body plumage being dull green, of a palish hue, merging to yellow upon the abdomen, with a strip of red upon the wing, and a blue patch at the base of the tail. She lacks the rich velvet black which makes the back of her mate so strikingly handsome, and her plumage is altogether inferior to that of the male bird.

This is a scarce variety, and, inhabiting as it does the dense bush of the interior of S.E. Australia, and being, moreover, of an exceedingly shy and timid nature, there are very few adults which fall into the trappers' hands, the greater number of those specimens which find their way to



THE CRIMSON WING.

(*Aprosmictus erythropterus.*)

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE CRIMSON WING.

<i>Crimson-winged Parrot</i> (Latham).	<i>Psittacus melanotus</i> (Shaw).
<i>Red-faced Green Lory</i> (Swainson).	<i>Platycercus erythropterus</i> (Tanner's
<i>Aprosmictus erythropterus</i> (Gould).	Transactions).

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This a scarce variety, and, inhabiting as it does the dense bush of the interior of S.E. Australia, and being, moreover, of an exceedingly shy and timid nature, there are very few adults which fall into the trappers' hands, the greater number of these specimens which find their way to



THE CRIMSON WING.

(*Agrosiaetus erythropterus.*)

Europe being taken from the nests, which are situated in the sprouts of gum trees, and are easily accessible to those aborigines who devote themselves to the capture of birds for sale.

The accompanying illustration was drawn from a young specimen, and is, as a consequence, scarcely so robust as would be found in the case of an adult; and, although it conveys a very good idea of the style of bird, yet it is by no means a flattering likeness, and hardly does justice to these gorgeously plumaged parakeets.

I specially commend them as cage pets on account of their great beauty and quiet nature, but I should scarcely expect any good results from an attempt to breed this species in confinement, as the birds are, in my opinion, too timid in an aviary either to nest or to hatch their eggs if they laid them. My experience with these birds has been limited to cages, yet I would not dissuade any amateur who possesses a pair from making the experiment of trying them loose in a bird room; but the most perfect quiet and rigid exclusion of strangers would be absolutely necessary, in order to afford the slightest chance of inducing the birds to breed. It is the neglect of these precautions which forms the chief cause of failure with most amateurs, who, by intruding upon their birds, disturb and unsettle them, and destroy that sense of security which is absolutely necessary to induce incubation. Amateurs enjoy the pleasure of watching their possessions, and of exhibiting them to friends, foolishly saying that the birds do not mind it; that they are not disturbed in the least by the presence of strangers. Now the experience of any country schoolboy ought to be sufficient to prove the fallacy of this reasoning, for they all know that the instinct of a bird teaches it to avoid as nesting places those which are much frequented by man, and how much stronger must this feeling be developed in birds which are reared in the dense woods of central Australia, where a glimpse of the "human form divine" is only seen at rare intervals.

As the Crimson Wing is not likely to become either commonly known or widely distributed amongst English fanciers, it is not necessary to say more upon the subject of its characteristics and treatment, except it be to add that, if an attempt is made to induce these birds to breed, a constant supply of soft food, consisting of scalded bread mixed into a moist paste by the addition of hard-boiled egg and honey, would be absolutely necessary as an ordinary article of diet, and it may be useful to mention the fact that these birds lay five eggs, about the size of those from the common pigeon, and that the nesting place, like that of all other parrots of kindred varieties, is in the hollow of a tree.

FOOD.—Temp., Canary and millet, a constant supply of soap sweetened with honey, and fruit in summer, nuts of all kinds.

DISEASES.—Guard against fits by the constant use of soft food, and there is little else to fear.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE BLUE MOUNTAIN LORY.

*Trichoglossus Swainsonii* (Gould).

THIS is one of the few honey eaters which find their way into English dealers' hands, and obtain a ready sale amongst unsuspecting amateurs, who know nothing of the natural food of their pets, and accept the dealer's assurance that ordinary seed and a piece of soaked bread is all that is necessary; the truth being that these lovely creatures all die soon after arrival here, the loss of their daily feast of nectar and pollen producing constipation, when the birds drop dead from their perch without a moment's warning, and when apparently in the most perfect health. By some writers this bird is called "Swainson's Lorikeet," but the title I use is the one most commonly known, and it is derived from the place whence the greatest numbers of these birds are found in New Holland.

The Blue Mountain Lory is about 10in. long, of a robust form, broad tail, and slightly elongated red beak. It has the brush-pointed tongue common to all the honey eaters, by which they collect the pollen from flowers of the eucalyptus. The head of the bird is in colour a lovely azure blue, the breast a vivid orange crimson, like the glow of a summer sunset, whilst the sides of the body are striped alternately with azure blue and crimson, the wings being of the richest sapphire blue.

These beautiful little creatures become excessively attached to their owners, and are incessant in their efforts to attract notice and obtain some caress, and this trait in their character endears them to the amateur and makes their untimely death a source of prolonged regret; indeed, I have known an instance where so grieved was a lady at the loss of her pet Blue Mountain Lory, that she gave up bird keeping altogether and disposed of her collection. Those who buy lories should do so with a full knowledge that it is 100 to 1 their birds will inevitably die within a year, no matter how great may be the amount of care lavished upon them. Of course, the evil day may be staved off by judicious feeding that accustoms to

the natural diet of these birds when enjoying their liberty amongst the luxuriant mass of blossom which covers the noble gum trees of Australia, and affords an unlimited supply of honey all the year round.

The Blue Mountain Lory has a soft agreeable note, and seldom indulges in any objectionable noises, except when strangers attempt to molest him; then the bird will scream violently and exhibit intense passion, for he is by no means a free lover, but usually reserves his winning ways and demonstrations of affection for one member of a household, and either resents the friendly overtures of the rest or treats them with qualified endurance. But for the terribly sudden death which so soon overtakes these birds they would be the most charming feathered pets that a lady could possess, for they have neither the power nor the inclination to bite savagely; but in view of the great dread which one is apt to entertain that the much loved pet which kissed you when retiring for the night may be dead when you come down in the morning, I am fain to advise those of my readers whose susceptible natures would be shocked by such a loss not to become the owner of a Blue Mountain Lory.

FOOD.—The lory should be fed exclusively upon soft food in which honey forms a prominent part, and the most scrupulous cleanliness should also be observed both with the cage and feeding tins, the effects of stale or sour soap being highly injurious to a creature whose digestive organs are so delicately constituted; and, indeed, those fanciers who become the owners of such birds must be prepared to devote nearly as much care and attention to them as would be required by a newly born child.

DISEASE.—As the fits to which the birds are subject are invariably fatal and almost instantaneous, it is useless to prescribe remedies, for there is no cure. Prevention is the great problem, and he who solves it will deserve the thanks of all who keep foreign birds.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE PURPLE CAPPED LORY.

<i>Psittacus domiceila</i> (Linnaeus Society).	<i>Der Purpus Kappigs Lory</i> (Bech- stein).
<i>Lory à Collier</i> (Buffon).	<i>Lorius domiceila</i> (Kuhl).

THIS is one of the hardiest of the Lory tribe brought to England, and it is, moreover, a great favourite amongst amateurs, exhibiting a strong affection for its owner and also considerable ability as a linguist. These birds are natives of New Guinea, and although possessing a brush tipped tongue, it is extremely doubtful whether they feed exclusively upon honey, for they evince no objection to other food when in confinement, and apparently suffer no ill effects from its use.

The male bird is 10in. or 11in. long, of robust shape, the tail being broad and rounded at the extremity. The predominant body colour is ruby red, dark upon the back and light upon the abdomen, the throat being ornamented with a crescent shaped patch of golden yellow, whilst the top of his head is covered by a cap of purple. The wings are a beautiful blue and green, whilst the tail is slightly purple; the feet are dark brown, and the toak, which is large, is a bright orange colour. Although their beak is of rather formidable appearance, yet they are weak billed, and have not the power of biting hard; it may be that the knowledge of this fact contributes to the remarkable amiability of their temperament. The hen is smaller than her mate, and she lacks the yellow neck marking, whilst her purple cap is also smaller and less brilliant, and her wings are dull green.

They require to share the constant society of their owner, and find intense delight in being frequently patted and caressed, repeating all the endearing expressions of their favourite attendant with a readiness and fluency which is quite astonishing. As a ventriloquist the Purple Cap possesses no equal, and the manner in which he will imitate domestic sounds, throwing his voice to the opposite side of the room, is perfectly startling to a stranger. Unfortunately, these birds are rarely imported by the ordinary traders, the great care required during transit, and the



THE PURPLE CAPPED LORY.

(*Psittacus dominicensis*.)

risk attending it, deterring them from including such troublesome specimens in their collections. As a consequence the price of these birds in England is so high as to place them beyond the reach of all save the wealthy, who can afford to risk a 10*l.* note upon a bird that may die within a few hours of its purchase.

They require a warm, luxurious home, and the slightest neglect or exposure to cold is sufficient to kill them. Both sexes are gifted with the faculty of speech; but the male bird excels in this respect, and is, moreover, an excellent whistler, possessing a full melodious tone, in which he readily imitates different tunes with the utmost ease and accuracy, and although his memory is bad, yet he will always be plucking up something new to succeed the forgotten.

FOOD.—Give boiled bread and milk, sweetened with honey or moist sugar, and ripe fruit in season.

DISEASES.—Like all the other members of the honey-eating tribe, these birds seldom live long in confinement, and they invariably drop dead in a fit, the result of constipation. Keep the food well moistened, and give in it an occasional seasoning of sweet nitre during the winter, and, above all, avoid cold and draughts. With these precautions the evil day may be staved off for two or three years; but I would not insure a lory's life for as many days, for these birds die in the most unreasonable manner.

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## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE SWIFT PARRAKEET.

*Psaltriparus discolor* (Shaw and  
Latham).  
*Psittacus hamealis* (Kühl).  
*Nunonides discolor* (Vigors).

*Euphonia discolor* (Wagler).  
*Lathamus rubrifrons* (Less.).  
*Swift parakeet* (Colonists New  
South Wales).

THIS is the smallest of the lory tribe, being only about the size of a full-grown Budgerigar, but the Swift is exceptionally beautiful, and quite as plentiful as swallows are in England at midsummer, and like those birds, are equally sociable, seeking food from the pollen and honey of the flowers which grow upon the Eucalypti in the main thoroughfares of Hobart Town and other busy cities, apparently unconcerned both at the presence of so many human beings and at the noise and din of street traffic.

The Swift is barely 9in. long, and as slender as the summer visitant whose name he bears. The ground colour of this bird's plumage is bright olive green, the face being encircled with a scarlet mask extending an inch downwards upon the throat. A band of azure blue passes across the crown of the head, and with the scarlet mask forms a striking contrast to the green back feathers. The wing coverts are blue, shading off to pea green, and the flights are dark brown, finely fringed with lacings of yellow and blue. The shoulders are brilliant scarlet, and this colour extends to the whole of the under coverts (wing linings), and also to the sides of the breast. The tail, which is 5in. long, and pointed, is of a rich bluish purple, with a crimson patch at the base of the tail extending upwards.

These birds are inordinately fond of honey, which they eat to repletion, and it appears to form their only food. It is much to be regretted that no serious efforts have been made to introduce these lovely little creatures into the English bird market, for I have known them to be kept as cage pets on a long sea voyage, and indeed my first personal acquaintance with these birds was made at the port of Nagasaki, in Japan, where the mate

of a Yankee clipper had brought out about a score of Swift parakeets upon the chance of realising a large sum for them amongst those enthusiastic Japanese ornithologists whose marvellous white Java sparrows had astonished the European naturalists. The Yankee venture was not very successful, for at that time a dollar went a long way in the purchase of birds, or anything else in Japan, and so I "traded" a Chinese mocking bird for a pair of Swifts, and soon found that the "Down Easter" had made the best of the bargain, for my new pets required no end of attention, and their food of soaked biscuit, honey, and moist sugar made liquid by the addition of water, attracted millions of ants and cockroaches to our quarters, and made my messmates vow that unless these birds were got rid of very shortly they should be sent to Davy Jones's locker. In spite of such trifling drawbacks, my Swifts and I became very good friends, and they proved the most gentle and affectionate pets I ever possessed, greeting my appearance for a "watch below" with the most intense demonstrations of joy, uttering their wings and thrusting their beaks between the bars of the cage as if they were fledglings welcoming a parent to give them food, and provoking an Irish messmate to say upon one occasion, "Och! Charlie, no boy, one would think that ye was a lion monger, and that them was yer chicken!" Poor Mick! this was a standing joke against him, but his gentleness of heart atoned for his lack of ornithological knowledge, and when a murderous Malay pirate drove his knife through the heart of my Irish messmate, and the smooth waters of the Sandy Straits closed over his body, I lost the most valuable assistant in my bird fancying that I ever possessed, and I moreover lost the man to whose ready arm and fearless heart I owed my life in a moment of deadly peril.

The fate which befell my Swift parakeets has always been to me a source of regret, for they were literally starved to death. We got frozen in for three months in the Gulf of Pechiles, thirty miles from land, and there it was that my stock of honey was stolen by some cold-blooded hungry marine, and all the efforts made to keep my pets alive upon sugar failed, for they gradually drooped and died, and were eaten! My monkey, too, shared a similar fate, for his stock of food was exhausted, and the severe cold contributed to "run him off the reel."

The result of my experience with Swift parakeets convinces me that they can be kept with less risk than many of the larger lories, and I should much like to find an enterprising trapper who would make the experiment of bringing over a few specimens to England, where a ready sale and high prices would well repay the venture. These charming little creatures are somewhat migratory in their nature, going to the south of Australia and Van Dieman's Land in the summer, and returning north in the winter, their movements being regulated by the supply of food. The colonists have apparently named them Swifts because of the shrill whistle which they utter when chasing each other, after the manner of our English swift.

There is a kindred variety, called the Scaly Breasted Lorikeet, which

inhabits New South Wales, and the body feathers of these birds are green, laced upon the edges with yellow, which gives a scaly appearance to them; the bird is only about five long. Another species, the same size, and called the Varied Lorikeet, is also common to New South Wales. Their body colour is pea green, ticked with yellow, the head and back are crimson, whilst the breast has a delicate bloom upon it like that of a ripe peach, curiously ticked with flecks of yellow. There is also the Musky Lorikeet, a very little green bird, with a red band across the eyes and forehead, and should any of my readers possess the means of obtaining a consignment of any of these lorikeets to England, the bird-loving community would be delighted to hear the results of such an experiment.

FOOD.- As stated above, the food should be soaked biscuit, honey, and moist sugar made into a syrup by the addition of water.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

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### THE CRIMSON LORY.

*Psittacus garrulus* (Linnaeus) So- | *Le Lori Noira* (Buffon).  
ciety. | *Le Parroquet Lori* (Le Vaillant).

This is a species commonly imported into Europe from the Moluccae, and, like all the Lorics, the Crimson bird is very docile and affectionate. His total length is 11in. or 12in., the head, body, and tail being clothed in plumage of bright scarlet, whilst the wings are green, merging to yellow upon the shoulders; the thighs are also green.

FOOD AND DISEASES.—The Crimson Lory, like all his tribe, is a honey eater, and although somewhat hardier than the preceding species, yet he is a short-lived bird in confinement, and very much addicted to fits.

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## CHAPTER XXVII.

### LOVE BIRDS.

THESE pretty little parakeets are great favourites with English fanciers, and are usually kept as cage pets, although by so doing their owners are induced by the quiet and stolid demeanour of these birds to form a total misconception of their nature. There are three varieties of this species commonly seen in England, but the family is much more extensive than would be generally supposed, and, unfortunately, the most beautiful specimens (Swinden's Love Birds) are never to be met with in our bird market. That being so, it is only necessary to note the fact that they resemble in general appearance the illustration which accompanies this chapter, but lack the face colouring, having instead a ring of black and yellow encircling the neck very like that upon the graceful Indian parakeet. I have never been able to secure a living specimen of Swinden's Love Bird, though no efforts have been spared on my part to do so; the variety is a very scarce one. Recently English dealers have received importations of a lavender headed Love Bird from New Guinea, and these have realised good prices, and shown themselves well able to bear the severity of our climate. There is also another variety commonly to be met with here, but their uniform green plumage, only relieved by an edging of blue upon the outer wing feathers, and at the base of their tails, renders them less attractive as cage or aviary pets than their more brightly plumaged relatives.

The illustration given here is that of an Abyssinian Love Bird, thousands of which are annually sold by English dealers, and the affection exhibited by these birds one for the other has earned for them the name by which they are commonly known. They measure barely six inches in extreme length, and the body colour is a bright glossy green, relieved by a tinge of dark blue upon the principal wing feathers, whilst the face is encircled by a round mask of brilliant red (in the cock), the beak being also of the same colour. The hen is paler in the face colouring than her mate. At the base of the tail, beneath the points of the wings, is a patch of rich



THE ABYSSINIAN LOVE BIRD.

(*Pittacula tarsula*.)

turquoise blue, whilst the tail itself is especially rich in its colours and markings. These can only be seen distinctly when the tail is expanded, as it always is in flight, and the principal feathers will then be found of a vivid red, barred near the ends by a band of black, and a fringe of green at the extremity. The upper and under coverts hide these beauties of plumage when the bird is at rest, but they are seen to great advantage in an aviary.

I may record the fact that the green variety (*Agapornis pullaria*) are very fond of sleeping head downwards, and usually go to roost hanging by one foot from the roof of their cages. As I have already stated, these birds are very quiet and stolid in their manner when kept in cages, and beyond evincing an intense affection one for the other, preening each other's feathers, and nestling together with much appearance of enjoyment, there is little to commend them as cage pets, but once give them their liberty, either in a room or an outdoor aviary, and you would fail to recognise them as the same birds, so active and vivacious will they become. In amiability of temper they are unequalled, and the most delicate of the tiny ornamental finches may be trusted with them in perfect safety.

As a proof of the hardy nature of the Red-faced or Abyssinian Love Bird, I may mention the fact that a pair of this variety stood the severe frosts of the winter of 1875 in a half circular outdoor aviary, facing due north, and they are at the moment of writing this, in perfect health and beautiful plumage, whilst many of the Australian parakeets have succumbed to the intense cold in the same aviary. In order to give exotic birds a fair chance of becoming acclimatised, I turn them loose in an outdoor aviary at the beginning of June, and leave them to take their chance, and my losses from birds so treated are much less than with specimens kept loose in rooms, though they are much more carefully protected from cold at night.

Although by no means certain that Love Birds will not breed in the open air in this country, still I have hitherto directed my attention to their nesting in indoor aviaries, and with tolerable success. Like all the rest of their tribe, they exhibit a propensity for burrowing, and a hollow log is to them a "joy for ever." They make no nest, but after nibbling away the entrance of the hole selected, and having cleared out of the cavity every movable chip, the hen lays four or five white-coloured eggs, very similar in appearance to those of the Budgerigar, though somewhat rounder in shape, and the term of incubation lasts three weeks, both male and female frequently sitting together upon the eggs. The young, when hatched, are covered with a soft white down, and the parents feed them in the same manner as the Budgerigar—taking the beak of their offspring into their own and disgorging food upon which the youngsters satisfy themselves. The breeding usually commences in July, and although a second brood is frequently produced in the autumn, yet the cold nights appear to affect the parents, and they fall into moult, neglecting their progeny.

The juvenile plumage of the nestlings is a dull green, and the face markings are both mottled and indistinct; it is, consequently, very difficult to determine the sexes before the first moult, but at this period the adult feathering is assumed, and the orange red of the hen's face distinguishes her at once from her crimson faced lord and master. Not that the male birds by any means deserve such a distinctive title, for, as a rule, they are the veriest of hen-pecked husbands, and exhibit both a solicitude to gratify the caprices of their wives, and an abject subservience, which is absolutely humiliating even in a parakeet. This allusion to the relation of the sexes affords me an opportunity of recording my protest against the commonly accepted theory that if one love bird dies, the bird's mate will pine away and die also. There never was a prettier story, perhaps, told in natural history than that which assures us of the excessive grief of the love bird for its lost mate. As the result of my experience and experiments I am firmly convinced that no love bird ever yet died of a broken heart, and that so long as the supply of food is kept up, they will suffer neither loss of appetite nor health from the death of a mate. Although these Red-faced or Abyssinian Love Birds will maintain their health and plumage out of doors, I do not strongly recommend them for breeding purposes to be kept under such conditions if an indoor aviary is available; but the Green Love Bird ("canary winged" the dealers call them), or the white-headed variety, are much more adapted for breeding in the open air.

The Green Love Birds, or Vernal parakeets, above referred to (*Psittacus versicolor*, Sparman) are natives of the Island of Java, have become scarcer than they were prior to the opening of the Suez canal, but they are not much esteemed by amateurs, and the canal has well repaid us by the facilities it affords for the rapid transit of Chinese and Japanese birds.

A very amusing game goes on every evening amongst my Abyssinian Love Birds at roosting time. They all range themselves in a row, like a regiment of soldiers, and crowd closely together upon a branch, but the birds all object to outside places, and they accordingly fly off when forced into that position, and, going to the rear, they cling to the branch, where, thrusting their head between the legs of a bird in the centre of the company, the intruder lifts him bodily out of his place. This continues so long as there is sufficient light to admit of the practice, and when at last the "pivot men" resign themselves to their fate they frequently go to the "right about," in order to keep both sides warm from the houl of their companions.

There is also a Green Love Bird which we get from the West Indies (*Psittacus cayennensis*—Swainson), and this variety may be recognised by a yellow patch upon the wing coverts.

A rare variety also comes from the Brazil, and is called the Golden Tailed Love Bird (*Psittacus chryseus*—Swainson), from the fact of its possessing a yellow tail; and I once possessed a pair of Love Birds which

had blue tails, and these birds were obtained by me in Malacca—they do not appear to have been classed by any writer.

FOOD.—Love Birds are small eaters, but their favourite food in confinement is the white millet seed, whilst a saucer of scalded bread will assist very materially in keeping them in health by preventing constipation, the common cause of fits.

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## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE BLOSSOM-HEADED PARRAKEET.

*Talporia's crynocephalus* (Zoological Society).

THERE are two varieties of this pretty bird, one coming from Hindostan and the other from Ceylon, the former being the more highly prized both for its beautiful plumage and vivacious habits. It has become a very scarce variety in England of late, although it was formerly met with frequently in the dealers' shops.

The Ceylon variety, which I call the Lavender-headed, as a means of distinguishing it from the Blossom, is a little smaller than his near relation, and has a dull lavender coloured head, the upper body, wings, and tail being dark green; the under feathers are much lighter, and the tail is long and tapering, the total length of the bird being 10in.

The Blossom-headed is a much brighter plumaged close-feathered bird, and he measures some 12in. in length. In general appearance he resembles the Small Ring-necked bird, except that his head and neck are a beautiful plum colour, with a bloom upon it like that seen upon a ripe peach. The two centre tail feathers are tinged with blue upon the upper side, and they are tipped with dingy white at the points. The body colour is green, darker above than beneath, and these birds are capable of being taught both to whistle and speak. I can also hear personal testimony to their strong attachment to their owner, for I had a bird of this species given me recently, but he was inconsolable at the change, and made such a hideous noise that, after a week's trial, I sent him home again, much to his delight.

Food and treatment will be the same as that for the Ring-necked Parakeet, which this bird resembles in appearance and general characteristics.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### THE GROUND PARRAKEET.

*Pezophorus formosus* (Gould).

It is somewhat strange that, although this species is plentifully distributed throughout the whole of Van Dieman's Land and South Australia, yet it has hitherto escaped the notice of those who supply the European bird market. This is the more to be regretted because the Ground parakeet is not only elegant in shape and beautifully marked in plumage, but it is also extremely hardy, and well adapted to aviary purposes. It is about equal in size to the Cockatiel, and somewhat resembles the Budgerigar in colour and markings, the upper portion of the body feather being very dark olive green, edged with yellow; the under surface, from throat to vent, is a greenish yellow, barred at regular intervals with stripes of darker green, giving a wavy appearance to the breast and abdomen. The tail is long and pointed, the feathers being barred with yellow and green alternately.

The colonists esteem this bird very highly for its flesh, which is said to possess a strong "gamey" flavour, very similar to that of an English partridge.

The Ground parakeet breeds in old burrows, or amongst rocks, and such like retreats upon the ground, and lays from five to nine eggs at a batch; its food consists of seeds, berries, and grubs.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### THE AMAZON PARROTS.

THESE are a much more numerous family than is generally supposed, no less than eight distinct species being commonly imported into England. They are all fairly good talkers, whistlers, and mimics; and as some varieties excel, they have consequently obtained a wide-spread reputation as excellent cage pets and become formidable rivals of the African grey birds; indeed, I give the Amazons the preference, for they are much hardier and learn to talk more quickly. As it is my intention to treat of these birds as cage pets only, I shall first give a few hints and directions for their management, and then describe the birds themselves. Some care is required in the purchase of an Amazon, or the unacquainted buyer will very likely find himself the owner of a worthless green bird (Le Vaillant's parrot), which possesses no power of speech. The best talking bird is the Yellow-faced Amazon of S. E. Brazil (*Chrysotis xanthops*), called by the dealers the Double-fronted Amazon; whilst the commonest and least desirable is the Blue-fronted Amazon of Pernambuco (*Chrysotis castina*). To succeed in teaching any of the parrot tribe you must begin upon them when they are young, or your labour will be in vain.

The young Amazon has a dark horn coloured beak, but the upper mandible whitens with age, a light shade commencing at the base of the beak when the bird is seven or eight years old, and this white continues extending downwards with every moult until all the colouring matter has disappeared, leaving the mandible quite clear. To the educated eye of an experienced person there are other signs which denote age; but these would be lost upon an ordinary parrot buyer, who had, therefore, better rely upon the beak test, although, alas! these tell-tale marks of nature can be made to disappear by means of a little manipulation on the part of unscrupulous men. It is, therefore, as wise in buying a parrot, as it is in purchasing a horse, not to rely upon one's own inexperienced judgment.

As the whole of the larger parrots require similar food and treatment,



THE DOUBLE-FRONTED AMAZON PARROT.

(*Chrysotis xanthiceps.*)

and are subject to the same diseases, I shall give some general directions here in preference to appending a foot-note to the description of each variety.

In the choice of a cage I should certainly advise a square shape, as being the most roomy and commodious, whilst galvanised or tinned wire is very much better than unlaqueered brass for the upper part of the structure, and wood ought not to form any portion of the cage, or it will harbour parasites. The perch should be thick in the centre and taper off towards the ends, thus affording relief to the feet at every change of position. This applies equally to those birds which are kept upon stands, for a round stick of equal thickness from end to end, cripples great numbers of parrots, makes their lives a misery to them, and brings them to an early grave.

The taming and teaching of parrots requires some little tact and patience, especially if the specimen you have to deal with is a newly imported savage creature. Now it is all very well for theorists to say that "the way to win the affection and obedience of an animal is to treat it with gentleness," but we all know how Artemus Ward's kangaroo treated the professor's thumb when its owner tried to carry this theory into practice, and if any of my readers believe that the extraordinary performances of trained troops of animals, about which we hear so much lately, is the result of "patient kindness," let me assure you, my reader, that you were never more mistaken in your life. Let someone try "moral suasion," on a savage parrot and see how it operates, and if the experimentalist does not give the bird up as incurable in a few weeks it will be a strange thing to me. For my part I would always prefer to buy a vicious bird if newly imported, for tameness is the earliest indication of disease; and although no one would, I hope, suspect me of unkindness to a dumb creature, yet I do not believe in the "moral suasion" theory. My way of taming a parrot consists in convincing him, first, that I am master, and as such will do just what I please with him; and secondly, that his fears are utterly groundless, for I will not hurt him. This is how it is done: When the bird has become somewhat accustomed to his new home, he is taken out of his cage every morning, being held with only sufficient force to prevent him biting or doing injury to his plumage. My hands are clothed in a pair of wicket-keeping gloves, specially padded for parrot taming, and with the forefinger and thumb of my right hand I grip the bird at the back of the neck, as close up as possible, whilst I allow him to stand upon the forefinger of my left hand until his first great terror subsides, then I let him stand on the back of a chair, always keeping his head "in chancery," and smooth his ruffled feathers, talking kindly to him meanwhile, and paying no heed whatever to his furious resentment of any friendly overtures. The first few lessons should not be prolonged beyond say five minutes, and it is desirable that the bird should be left perfectly undisturbed after being restored to his cage, or he may knock himself about. After a few of these handlings, the bird will begin to lose his fear of you, and if your hands are sufficiently protected you may

loosen the grip upon his neck and let his head free, keeping your left hand upon his back to prevent him getting away, and with your right hand try to "scratch his poll." Then, still holding him in this position, get someone to move the cage slowly towards him, and when the open door is sufficiently close let him pop in of his own accord. At the end of a fortnight, if this treatment is persevered in, your parrot will have become as docile as a kitten, and you will have done more towards winning his friendship and respect than ever would have resulted from as many years of "gentleness" on your part. Parrots may be "unreasoning" creatures, as our learned professors teach us, but you may depend upon it that these birds know perfectly well when a person is afraid of them, and act accordingly. For my own part I cannot subscribe to the "unreasoning" theory, for as in man as in parrots, there are gradations of mental capacity, and amongst those birds which I have known possessing great intelligence, there have been instances which induce me to believe that parrots think as well as talk.

It is of course useless to proscribe my mode of taming these birds either to a lady or a timid man, for it requires a steady hand and an absence of fear, to enable you to handle a parrot without damage to his plumage or risk to yourself, and therefore those who cannot do this must endeavour by coaxing and bribing with choice tit-bits of food, to win the confidence of their pets. This can be done, but the process is a slow one, and seldom very complete, except after long years of acquaintance.

The teaching to talk is a much easier matter than might be supposed, for the less you bore the bird with his lesson the more likely he is to pick it up. I quite agree that parrots pay greater attention to what goes on out of sight, but within hearing; and I had a bird that caught all the expressions which came down the hatchway from the quarter-deck, whilst every attempt to teach him set phrases proved unavailing. His absurd juggling up of the words of command with chance expressions used to amuse us amazingly; for instance, he would hail "Main top there," and dropping his voice, exclaim, "Who the — stole my soap?" His imitation of the captain's voice calling up the companion ladder, "Officer of the watch!" was perfect, as was the manner in which he repeated the quartermaster's shouts, "Steady port," and "Steady starboard," and so absorbed did this bird become in listening to and repeating the sounds of the upper deck, that he often caught an order, such as "Turn the hands up!" and repeated it to us below, before the boatswain's whistle announced the order to the crew. Perhaps the most remarkable instance of this peculiarity in the bird to listen and imitate sounds from the upper deck was shown in the fact that when roused by the sentry striking the bell in the night watches, Poll would, on a quiet night at sea, repeat the cries of those look-outs whose voices reached him, finishing with an expostulation that was commonly provoked from the occupant of a neighbouring hammock. Thus Poll would call, in a gruff voice, "Main top," "Life buoy" "Go to sleep, you old fool." I have neither space nor inclination to repeat the

many parrot anecdotes which my experience could furnish, and indeed I only referred to this sailor's pet because by so doing I could illustrate the best means by which to teach birds to talk.

FOOD.—The staple articles of diet for parrots consist of canary seed, hemp seed, and crushed maize, together with stale bread that has been scalded and squeezed dry. There is no possible good to be derived from boiling the maize, whilst it will assuredly do considerable harm if it ferments, as it usually does if kept too long. The crushed maize is much preferable to the whole, and the hemp seed should not be given so plentifully as the other hard food; but in this the owner must be guided by the treatment to which his bird has hitherto been accustomed, for there is no hard and fast rule to be laid down in the matter of feeding a parrot. When I buy one, as in my weakness I do pretty frequently, it is my practice to make careful inquiry as to what he has hitherto been fed upon; and if it is hemp only, why hemp only I keep him until such time as I am able by educating his taste, to induce him to partake of the standing disease of my feathered pets. There is an absurd prejudice against the use of hemp seed, for which ignorant writers of bird keepers' "manuals" are mainly responsible, and as a consequence there are more birds die from semi-starvation than there are from repletion. Fancy a man who presumes to guide and advise amateur bird fanciers urging them to feed their parrots exclusively upon boiled bread and milk! He deserves to be mauled by an old blue manow that I wot of. Bread and milk indeed. Were the powerful beak and gizzard of the parrot designed by nature to masticate and digest such stuff as that? Surely not; and the only explanation of such pernicious twaddle is, that the writer had no practical knowledge of his subject; although that is no excuse for the amount of suffering which his advice may have inflicted upon the birds fed as he prescribes—*gyp* ought certainly to be his natural food! Upon the question of promiscuous feeding, or the giving of odds and ends and tidbits from your table, I am bound to say that it is not only harmless, but highly advantageous to the birds, if kept within proper bounds of moderation, affording a variety in their food, which keeps them in health. Rich puddings and pastry are the things most to be avoided; but I am not one of those who believe that a well-picked bone now and then will make a cannibal of your bird, and lead to feather eating. On the contrary, I find that amongst a vast number of these cases brought under my notice, there is not one in a hundred that occurs amongst birds fed from the table in addition to their ordinary diet, and my own very strong impression is that it is want of variety and poverty of food that produces the morbid condition resulting in feather eating. There is always great danger in cages made with bars keeping the bird off the sand tray, and the use of sand tins, so that a sufficient amount of grit will not be taken up to keep him in health, and I therefore much prefer to give a parrot his sop from the floor of the cage, doing away with the cross bars at the bottom as utterly useless, except to collect dirt. Of course I assume that

the tray will be cleaned every other day at least, and that a thin sprinkling of nice sharp gravel will be as often renewed, and all such odds and ends as nuts, bits of fruit, biscuits, and other unconsidered trifles, will be much more readily picked up a second time if the bird is accustomed to get his soft food with a bit of sand upon it now and then. Above all things keep the perch scrupulously clean, and to do this take it out at least once in every week, and have it thoroughly scoured with soap and water, whether it be dirty or not, and you will avoid both crippled feet and gout.

**DISEASES.**—The diseases to which parrots are subject all arise from colds, which develop into a variety of forms, the most serious of which is inflammation. The bird puffs himself, and trembles at intervals, appearing sleepy and indifferent alike to food and those who minister to his wants. Cover the cage closely, and keep it in a nice warm atmosphere day and night, and if the bowels are relaxed give him a little sherry with his water and some nice biscuit slightly moistened with milk. Careful nursing is more likely to effect a cure than any drugs, and I strongly deprecate their use in such cases. Constipation is apparent by the unsuccessful efforts of the bird to obtain relief, and a feather dipped in castor oil should at once be got ready; a little irritation will induce the bird either to open his beak or bite the feather, and, in either case the dose will be quickly administered, for he will readily swallow the oil. During the period of incubation a little extra care is necessary to be taken of the bird, especially at night; and I cannot too strongly urge my readers not to keep their pets in window recesses during the winter. It is a common practice, but it is exceedingly cruel, and, moreover, endangers the lives of the birds.

In the appended list of Amazon parrots I have given nothing but the barest outline descriptions, marking prominent only those distinctive points of colouring which will enable amateurs to identify the birds, and I purposely omit many details which would only confuse; for, as I said at the outset, I write for the information of my bird-loving friends, and not for the instruction of students of "technical ornithology."

**GOLDEN NARED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis auripalliatia*).—This bird is a native of Central America, but it is not greatly esteemed as a linguist, being rather addicted to screeching, and less tractable than some of its kindred varieties. A full-grown specimen measures about 12in. or 14in. in extreme length, and is robust in form; the whole of the body feathers are lead green, dark above and light beneath, with a yellow patch at the base of the neck, from which the bird derives his name; the principal wing feathers are dark blue, with a crimson patch upon the outer edge; the tail is short, broad, and light green in colour.

**DUPRENE'S AMAZON** (*Chrysotis Dupresiana*).—This is one of the Amazons from South East Brazil which has little to commend it, and amateurs who are seeking a bird of gentle and confiding disposition,

and good vocal abilities, will do well to put a black mark against this variety, as it possesses none of the qualifications named. The plumage is a uniform green, with a narrow band of red across the bird's nose, or, to speak more technically, at the base of the upper mandible. The spurious wings and flights are blue, and there is also a tinge of the same colour around the eye. This bird is equal in size to the preceding species.

**FINCH'S AMAZON** (*Chrysotis finchii*). In this we have a Mexican member of the same family, the bird resembling in general characteristics and appearance those above described. The body feathers are green, and there is a broad band of dull red crossing the brow, merging into lavender blue at the crown of the head, and circling round the back of the neck. The cheeks are bright grass green, as are the feathers upon the breast and abdomen, whilst the principal wing feathers are blue. This bird is but an indifferent talker.

**GREEN CHEEKED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis verdigenalis*).—Why this bird should be called by the above name by English naturalists is a puzzle to me, because there is no marked difference between the colour of this bird's cheeks and those of the Mexican species; and, inasmuch as Green Cheek has a red patch of feathers forming a cap upon the crown of his head, I cannot but think that such a distinctive badge should give the bird a name by which he would easily be recognised. He is a native of Columbia, and is rather a favourite, being tractable and somewhat clever. His body feathers are leaf green on the back, merging to a yellowish tinge upon the breast and abdomen, the head being covered by a cap of bright red, whilst a patch of the same colour will be found upon the lower part of the wing.

**BLUE-FRONTED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis castiza*).—This is the commonest of the Amazon tribe seen in England, and being a native of Pernambuco it is easily obtainable, and consequently a great many are brought over by seamen as tokens of affection to the systems of Wapping and St. George's in the East; but when times are hard and homeward bound sailors grow scarce, my old friend Jamrach becomes the owner of these birds, and having ascertained to what degree their morals have suffered by evil communication, he disposes of them accordingly, the most depraved finding a ready sale amongst a certain class of traders, who say that "A good swearing parrot pleases their customers."

The Blue Fronted Amazon is equal in size to any of the preceding varieties, and, like them, its body colour is dark green above and light green below, whilst the face and forehead are pale yellow, tinged with blue. The shoulders are edged with bright yellow, and mottled with red, whilst a crimson patch is also found upon the flight feathers of the wing. Some of these birds become really good talkers, but I have had a striking instance of their unreliability in this respect, for a young specimen of this

variety has been in the constant society of an exceedingly clever Grey parrot for twelve months, and yet the young bird never opens his mouth except to eat and shriek. This latter accomplishment imperils his life every day in the week, and exasperates the members of the household beyond measure, so I propose to offer him to a friend who once presented me with a dog of dirty habits and sheep hunting proclivities!

**YELLOW SHOULDERED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis ochropus*).—This is a brighter plumaged bird than any of the preceding, his green coat being of more lustrous and varied tints, whilst the breast and abdomen have a decidedly yellow tinge upon them. The shoulders are marked with the colour which gives the birds their name, and there is a red patch in the blue wing feather. The forehead is circled by a band of yellow. This variety belongs to South America.

**YELLOW-FACED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis santurops*).—The English dealers call this the "Double Fronted Amazon," and although it is not quite so common as the rest—coming as it does from the S.E. portion of Brazil—yet it is generally considered to be the most ready of speech and gentle in disposition of any of the Amazon family, and as a consequence realises a higher price in the bird market. "Ah!" exclaimed an old parrot trapper to me the other day, "Amazon parrots used to satisfy the English fanciers at one time; but 'no', they won't go down now, when Pykin nightingales and Japanese albinos can be bought for less money than a pair of London fancy canaries; them old-fashioned parrots 'aint in the same swim—they are stale and need up." This was said regretfully, for it was the result of bitter experience, as my bird-catching companion told me that he had struggled against the change in public taste, and continued to import parrots until he had to sell his last consignment to dealers for about the same price as he paid to get the birds to England. The birds of Australia have undoubtedly "used up" those of America to some extent, and the Suez Canal has also contributed to the same result.

But to return to the subject of the yellow-faced Amazon. They are unquestionably the best of the family for cage purposes, and a little care in noting the distinguishing marks will assure your getting the correct variety, should you desire to purchase a bird of this kind. The body colour is a rich green on the upper surface, and light green beneath; the face and forehead pale yellow, or rather primrose; shoulders yellow mottled with red; the primaries, or principal wing feathers, dark blue, with a patch of red upon the outer ones; tail dark green at its base, and becoming much lighter at its extremity.

These birds have a wonderful faculty for the imitation of domestic sounds when first introduced into a house, and a little precaution at the outset will perhaps save them from catching up objectionable noises, which they will retain in their memory hereafter, and repeat to your annoyance.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

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### THE FESTIVE PARROT.

*Chrysotis Festivus.*

ALTHOUGH this bird is a native of South America, and bears a general appearance to the Amazons, still it is of a widely-different nature, and is by no means a desirable cage pet, being both morose of temper and incapable of imitating the human voice, whilst its own harsh notes are very discordant and objectionable.

This bird is considerably larger than the Amazon, and measures fifteen inches in extreme length. The body feathers are dark green, with a band of red across the nose, whilst the tail coverts, and lower part of the back beneath the tips of the wings, are crimson. The primaries of the wing are rich blue, and there is frequently a tinge of the same colour upon the back part of the head. With this description before them, amateurs should be able to identify the bird, and save themselves from imposition in cases where the Festive parrot is offered for sale as an Amazon.

The treatment is the same as that for the Amazon.

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**YELLOW SHOULDERED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis schreptera*).—This is a brighter plumaged bird than any of the preceding, his green coat being of more lustrous and varied tints, whilst the breast and abdomen have a decidedly yellow tinge upon them. The shoulders are marked with the colour which gives the birds their name, and there is a red patch in the blue wing feather. The forehead is circled by a band of yellow. This variety belongs to South America.

**YELLOW-FACED AMAZON** (*Chrysotis sandwicensis*).—The English dealers call this the "Double Fronted Amazon," and although it is not quite so common as the rest—coming as it does from the S.E. portion of Brazil—yet it is generally considered to be the most ready of speech and gentle in disposition of any of the Amazon family, and as a consequence realises a higher price in the bird market. "Ah!" exclaimed an old parrot trapper to me the other day, "Amazon parrots used to satisfy the English fanciers at one time; but 'Lor', they won't go down now, when Lykia nightingales and Japanese albinos can be bought for less money than a pair of London fancy canaries; them old-fashioned parrots 'aint in the same swim—they are stale and used up." This was said regretfully, for it was the result of bitter experience, as my bird-catching companion told me that he had struggled against the change in public taste, and continued to import parrots until he had to sell his last consignment to dealers for about the same price as he paid to get the birds to England. The birds of Australia have undoubtedly "used up" those of America to some extent, and the Suez Canal has also contributed to the same result.

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The treatment is the same as that for the Amazons.

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## CHAPTER XXXII.

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### LE VAILLANT'S PARROT.

*Psittacus Le Vaillantii.*

This is a green African parrot, which we get from the Cape of Good Hope, but it is, like the preceding species, a non-talker and very spiteful. In colour it is olive green above, with rather pretty shadings, whilst the wings and abdomen are bright leek green. The shoulders are edged with orange red, and the wings and tail are a blackish green. In size and shape this bird is equal to the grey parrot, and is usually sold as an Amazon.

Food and treatment of diseases are the same as those for the Amazon.

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THE GREY PARROT.

(*Psittacus erithacus*.)

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE GREY PARROT.

*Psittacus erithacus* (Linnæus).

THIS bird is too well known to need any lengthened description from me, for it is undoubtedly the most popular cage pet in England, and when once acclimatised it is exceedingly hardy, numerous instances being recorded of specimens living fifty and even eighty years in confinement. They are natives of the interior of Africa, and those imported into this country are invariably young birds which have been taken from the nest, but coming as they do from the Tropics, the climatic change produces consumption, of which disease quite ninety per cent. die. The presence of this disease is easily detected by those engaged in the trade, although it may not be apparent to the inexperienced eye of an amateur; but these "soft" birds, as they are called, find a ready sale amongst amateurs. The letters addressed to me upon this subject would fill a volume, but its contents would certainly frighten any person who meditated the purchase of a grey parrot, and cause hesitation before venturing upon such an investment. If a bird can be obtained immediately upon arrival in this country there is a fair chance of saving him, but inasmuch as he has been brought over in a box cage, wired only in front, and even that protected by a loosely woven cotton cover, it is an act of insanity to transfer the bird to an open cage and then expect him to bear exposure in a draughty room without taking cold. If you put him in an ordinary parrot cage it ought to be covered with baize, or some such thick material, leaving only sufficient space to enable the bird to see his food, and even this opening should be closed when you are retiring for the night, and care should moreover be taken to prevent the temperature of the room falling below temperate heat, if it be winter time, whilst in summer it is equally important to guard against draughts. For my own part, I would much rather buy an acclimatised bird for 2*l.* or 3*l.* than give 10*s.* for a newly imported specimen, even if I was allowed to choose him myself. There is no satisfaction in selling a Grey parrot—so said that veteran importer Jamrach—and he added that if it were not for people insisting

upon having these birds he would never keep one in stock, for even when they did not die before being sold, they died immediately afterwards, and were therefore always a source of loss and annoyance. Jamrach was right, the English parrot-keeping community believe in the Grey birds, and I readily admit that they are, when accustomed to our abominable climate, most excellent birds, that live a very long time, and give very little trouble, whilst as talkers, whistlers, and mimics, I am bound to say that they hold the most prominent place in public estimation, although I have serious doubts as to the legitimacy of their title to the position.

Several instances are recorded of Grey parrots breeding in confinement, but as artificial heat is necessary to produce a desire to incubate, I have never experimented with these birds, although I quite believe in the possibility of brooding them in this country. They are said to produce four eggs at a batch, and to commence their nesting in the spring, breeding, like all the rest of the parrot family, in hollow logs, the male bird sitting beside his mate, and offering a most determined opposition to any person approaching the nesting place.

The Grey parrot varies from ten to twelve inches in length, and is as "square built" as a Dutch merchantman, the general appearance of the bird indicating the possession of considerable strength, whilst the twinkling of his eye, and a staid expression about his head, denotes the possession of a high degree of intelligence. His body plumage is ashy grey, the outer edges of the feathers being much lighter than the centres, giving to each a sharply-defined outline, that adds considerably to the beauty of the whole. The tail is short and broad, and its colour is a bright scarlet. The eye is encircled by a bare space, the skin of which is nearly white. The cere across the nose is also of the same colour, and the beak is black and very strong. Except that the male birds are slightly superior in size, the sexes cannot otherwise be distinguished, and as the females well sustain the credit of their sex by possessing equal abilities, both as talkers and mimics, the question of sex need not influence those who propose to purchase a bird of this variety, except where it is desired to have a whistler, in which case obtain a male, for the gentler sex lacks this peculiarly masculine gift.

**FOOD AND DISEASES.**—As the general directions for the management of parrots, which I gave under the heading of "Amazons" are equally applicable to the Grey birds, I must refer my readers to that chapter for information upon this subject.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV.

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### THE WHITE-FRONTED PARROT.

*Psittacus leucocephalus* (Linnaeus). | *Der Weiszköpfige Amazonen Papagei*  
*Amazon à tête Blanche* (Buffon). | (Bochstain).

THESE birds are brought to Europe from the West India Islands, and are commonly sold as small White Fronted Amazons. They are not more than half the size of a grey parrot, and have little, save their extreme docility, to recommend them as cage pets. The prevailing body colour is green, wings indigo blue, and back somewhat rusty green. The tail is short, giving to the bird a stotopod appearance; the forehead is white, and the beak flesh coloured. Total length six.

This species seldom acquires any proficiency as linguist, the limit of their ability being restricted to the imitation of discordant sounds. These birds, however, become exceedingly tame, and permit strangers to caress and handle them with the same indifference as if it was their owner. This peculiarity is, in itself, a proof of deficient mental capacity, for all birds possessing a high degree of intelligence resent the caresses of a stranger, and exhibit a strong attachment to their owner. This peculiarity is not, however, limited to birds.

As a gentle pet, this bird has much to commend him, and he should be treated in the same manner as the preceding.

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## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE GREAT WHITE COCKATOO.

<p><i>Psittacus galeritus</i> (Latham).  <i>Great Sulphur Crested Cockatoo</i>          (Shaw).  <i>Cacatua galerita</i> (Le Vaillant).  <i>Phylolophus galeritus</i> (Vigors).  <i>Crested Cockatoo</i> (Latham and          White).</p>	<p><i>Carraway Curriang</i> (Aborigines          N.S.W.).  <i>Manqaraps</i> (Papuan of New          Guinea).  <i>Kakatoes à luyps Javns</i> (Buffon).  <i>Der Gellhaubige Kakatu</i> (Bech-          stein).</p>
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THIS bird is plentifully distributed over the whole of Australia, and the species exhibits considerable variation of size in different parts of that country; but there can be no doubt whatever that the Yellow-crested White Cockatoos all belong to the one family. The largest are those found in Van Diemen's Land, and they are the most highly esteemed amongst amateurs, both for their immense bulk—being literally as big as a small goose—and also for their abilities as linguists and mimics. The plumage of these birds is snowy white, with the exception of their fan-like crest, which is of a pale sulphur colour, merging to white on the outside edges of the feathers. The inner linings of the wings are also tinged with primrose yellow, as are the under tail feathers. The crest is six long, and can be raised or depressed at will.

Immense colonies of these birds, several thousands strong, congregate along the banks of the river Murray during the breeding season, and there rear their young amongst the rocks, in the fissures of which they are secure from molestation. The nestlings, however, are easily captured, and become very docile in a short space of time; but they lack that strong attachment for their owner which distinguishes most of the parrot tribe, and permit strangers to caress them with as much freedom as they exhibit towards their oldest friends. Like all the large species of the Scansores family, the White Cockatoo is a bird of very slow growth, the young remaining in the nest for nearly three months from the date of hatching. As I have elsewhere stated, slow development and longevity are inseparably connected



THE GREAT WHITE COCKATOO.

(*Calyptorhynchus albus*.)

in the bird world, and the White Cockatoo affords a striking illustration of this fact, for they attain to an immense age; one authenticated instance is recorded of a Great White Cockatoo living for 120 years in confinement. I know a bird of this variety which has been in the possession of its present owner for twenty-six years, and he recently showed me two eggs which she had laid, they were about the size of a bantam's. He told me that she lays nearly every year, and exhibits a strong desire to incubate, but this passes off in about a week, and the bird resumes her usual mode of life. My own experiences with these creatures leads me to believe that they would breed in confinement if suitably housed, but I can testify that the experiment will not answer indoors unless the owner is deaf; for should he happen to be a man of literary tastes, of nervous temperament, he will assuredly be provoked to lay violent hands upon his Great White Cockatoos, if they behave as mine did, for they awake the echoes of the whole place at frequent intervals during their gambols, and "cawed" in concert with a violence that almost shook the house. Yes, my white-coated friends, you are very nice docile pets as long as you remain tethered by the leg to a stand, and can be kept in order by frequent admonitions and caresses, but your harsh, grating cry curdles my blood, and almost tempts me to strike your name out of my list of pets. One of these birds, a very grand old fellow, is allowed the run of a country gentleman's house and grounds, and in the summer time you may see him mounted high up in a large elm tree adjoining the road, giving vent to his feelings by a long series of the most abominable noises, illustrative of pig-killing, dogs yelling as if in pain, the blast of a steam whistle, and a variety of similar things, interspersed with his own natural shrieks and bursts of laughter. He always retires to the house when hungry, and has never strayed beyond his owner's premises.

In their natural state these birds feed upon roots and bulbs extracted from the ground, but maize is their staple article of diet, as the farmers can testify to their cost, for the birds are equally as fond of Indian corn when newly sown and sprouting in the ground as they are when it is ripening in the ear. They commit terrible havoc amongst the crops, and notwithstanding their immense numbers it is by no means an easy matter to get a "pot shot" at them in open or cultivated land, for they are as quick of ear and eye as rooks, and, like them, guard against the approach of the plundered farmer by posting sentinels to give warning of his approach. At the first "carrah!" the whole flock rises like a kite into the air, making the most unearthly din, and sails off majestically to fresh fields and pastures new. An incessant war of extermination is waged by the settler against these birds, but without any apparent reduction of their numbers; for they still continue to fatten upon the fruits of his toil, and to yield an occasional return by the loss of some of their number, whose tough carcases furnish him with a savoury stew; and although birds of this family are not good eating, yet they make food of that class which bushmen say "lasts a long time if you can get it down!"

Those amateurs possessing space, and inclination to make the experiment of attempting to breed these large birds out of doors, need have no fear of their being injured by cold, if the aviary is free from draught; and, with three or four pair of kindred varieties in the same place, I believe that the attempt would prove successful.

FOOD.—Maize, hemp, nuts, biscuits, fruit, bread, and vegetables.

DISEASES.—Colds are sometimes productive of serious consequences amongst these birds, and care should be taken to keep them out of a draught, for an ounce of prevention is worth a hundredweight of cure. Should the bird take cold he will puff his feathers and become drowsy and indifferent to everything, occasionally sneezing, or at least doing something akin to it, and there will be a slight moisture about the nostril that induces the bird to try and expel it. Transfer your pet to a cage, if he be on a stand, and cover the cage, leaving only sufficient opening to admit light. Add a slight quantity of brandy to the contents of the water tin, and induce him, if possible, to eat boiled bread and milk, thickly sprinkled with maw (poppy) seed; keep him in a nice even temperature night and day until he recovers. As colds are the forerunners of all the ills that afflict the cockatoo tribe—colds can be avoided without any pampering—prompt action and careful attention will effect a cure without the appearance of diarrhoea, which usually is the second stage of the disease. When that sets in withdraw the sop and give rice biscuits, and should the relaxation continue beyond two days sprinkle a pinch of magnesia into the water tin and allow it to remain there twelve hours, then re-fill the tin with pure water. This is all that can be done for him, and you can only keep him warm and let him take his chance.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE LARGE ROSE-CRESTED COCKATOO.

<i>Cuculius eos</i> (Gould).	<i>Rose Cockatoo</i> (Latham and
<i>Psittacus eos</i> (Kuhl).	Sturt).
<i>Cacatua rosea</i> (Le Vaillant).	<i>Cacatua roseicapilla</i> (Wagler).
<i>Phylolophus eos</i> (Linnman & Co.	<i>Cacatua moluccensis</i> (Zoological
city).	Society).

This is a gigantic bird, even larger than the preceding species, and like them, is commonly met with in all parts of Australia, living together in immense flocks, which prey upon the corn and root crops, doing no end of damage to the farmers. These creatures are horribly noisy, both in a wild state and in confinement, and I have heard the terrific "cur-rah!" of a tame specimen when quite a mile away from the ship, and I—tell it not, in Gath—dropped that bird overboard, with his head muffed and a 32lb. shot tied to his legs! How the captain, who owned him, did furiously rage, and give vent to flowery quotations from the "language of the poets," and how peaceful our middies' sleeping place appeared in the morning watches, after that deed of darkness, it needs not here to tell, but no man knew the fate of the big cockatoo except myself until now that the gallant captain has long since "gone aloft," I can ease my conscience by confession.

If persons possess suitable places in which to keep these birds, where their noise will not be a nuisance, they are really very gentle and affectionate in their nature, permitting themselves to be handled with the utmost freedom, and showing great attachment to their owner. They can, moreover, be taught to throw up their wings, erect their crest, giving a profusion of low bows, but this performance inevitably provokes an outburst of "cur-rah's!" that will make your hair stand on end. They repeat the word "cockatoo," imitate farm-yard sounds, and whistle the dog, but that is the usual limit of their abilities.

This bird is about eighteen or twenty inches long, and its plumage is white faintly tinged with a delicate rose pink. The crest is hoary and fits closely to the nape of the neck when at rest, the outer colour harmonising

with that of the general plumage, but when the crest is erected the under feathers are found to be of a rich orange red.

There is no recorded instance of attempts being made to breed these birds in England, but I am quite of opinion that it could be successfully carried out, and if our Zoological Society would only turn their attention to parrot breeding, instead of crowding their birds together in tiers like a dealer's shop, they would be doing good service to the science, and add a great stimulus to the production of foreign birds amongst amateurs, besides adding to the attractions of the gardens.

The treatment is the same as for the Great White Cockatoo.



THE ROSY COCKATOO.

(*Cacatua roseicapilla*, W igne.)

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE ROSEY COCKATOO.

*Cacatua roseicapilla* (Wagler).  
*Cacatua rosea* (Le Vaillant).  
*Psittacus eos* (Kühl).

Rose-coloured Cockatoo (Latham  
and Start).  
*Ptytolophus eos* (Vigors).

THIS is probably the most plentiful species of Australian cockatoo to be obtained in England, immense numbers being reared from the nest for importation to this country. They are extremely hardy and admirably adapted either as cage or aviary pets, for they are the most amiable of the cockatoo family, and may safely be kept with any of the larger parakeets, whilst their handsome plumage makes them attractive objects, either in a collection or a cage. Unfortunately, the sexes so closely resemble each other that it requires an experienced eye to distinguish them, and this is sure to prove a source of vexation and disappointment to amateurs.

The size of this bird is almost equal to that of a Grey parrot, but the Rosey is a more elegant and vivacious bird, his back and upper body feathers being of that delicate tint which ladies call a French grey, whilst the whole of the under feathers from neck to vent are a lovely rose colour. The beak is white, and the feathers on the crown of the head can be raised at will, forming a small crest, but when at rest these feathers fall back, and the bird appears to possess no crest. Their capacity as linguists is not great, and I regret to say that they are slightly addicted to screeching; but when kept in pairs, as they always should be, this objectionable propensity is seldom indulged in to any serious extent, whilst liberty in an aviary appears to deprive them of all desire to create a disturbance. They are incessantly on the move, exploring the aviary floor, seeking stray seed there in preference to getting it from the tray, and varying the proceedings by occasionally chasing each other with an amount of activity which one would hardly expect in birds of this type, appearing, as they do to us, so stolid and mopy when kept in cages. My rosey friends are very gay and happy in an aviary, and I would strongly

recommend amateurs who keep these birds to give them their liberty—if they possess the means of doing so—and even if the birds are re-caged during the winter, their summer ranging will greatly improve them both in health and plumage, whilst the winter caging keeps them both tame and affectionate and destroys that shyness which so strongly militates against large birds of this class breeding in confinement.

The nesting of the Rosy Cockatoo in its wild state commences soon after Christmas, but in this country egg production is deferred until the spring gets well advanced, the birds choosing for their nesting place hollow stumps of trees, which are so honeycombed with age as to possess very little substance save their outer shell, thus affording large and commodious apartments, admitting of the male bird sitting near his mate, and occasionally relieving her in the task of incubation, without being exposed to the inquisitive gaze of anyone. The hen usually lays two eggs, but I have known many instances of three being produced, so that I am not disposed to think that a greater number than two is exceptional. The eggs are white in colour, about equal in size to those of the blackbird, they are laid upon a bed of soft decomposed wood dust scraped together from the sides of the hollow tree in which the nest is situated. The whole process of laying and hatching occupies a month, and the "squabs" are the most ugly, not to say hideous, little creatures that can well be imagined. They are born without a "rag to their backs," a few yellowish hairs upon their hips, shoulders, and crown, adding to the absurdity of their appearance, whilst their heads are so enormously disproportionate to their bodies that they are quite a week old before they can hold their heads erect, and even then they "wobble" from side to side, and are frequently laid down to rest the neck. But with these larger birds one sees the wonderful instinct—call it what you please—which induces all the parrot family to feed their young, for by taking the beak into their own, and thus holding them steady, the fledglings are enabled to swallow the food with which they are supplied. The growth of the larger species of parrot family is very slow, and the Rosy Cockatoo is fully three months old before it is able to leave the nest, and even then appears quite dependent upon the old birds for food. I was once compelled to set the part of "wet nurse" to a pair of baby cockatoos of this species, whose mother had died, and whose father was so stricken with grief that he neglected the poor little fellows. They certainly were about as uninviting as anything in the baby line that I had ever seen, and even after chewing a cud of maize and shelled oats, it required a considerable amount of consideration before I could summon up sufficient enthusiasm to go through the process of feeding, yet it was a case of life or death, and—but no matter—I will spare my sensitive readers these unsavoury details. I fed the birds and my gentle littlebantam hen, who happened to be broody at the time, performed the part of foster mother to perfection. It is true that she resented the loss of her own eggs at the outset, and that her first look of intense horror and disgust when she saw the big headed baby cockatoos,

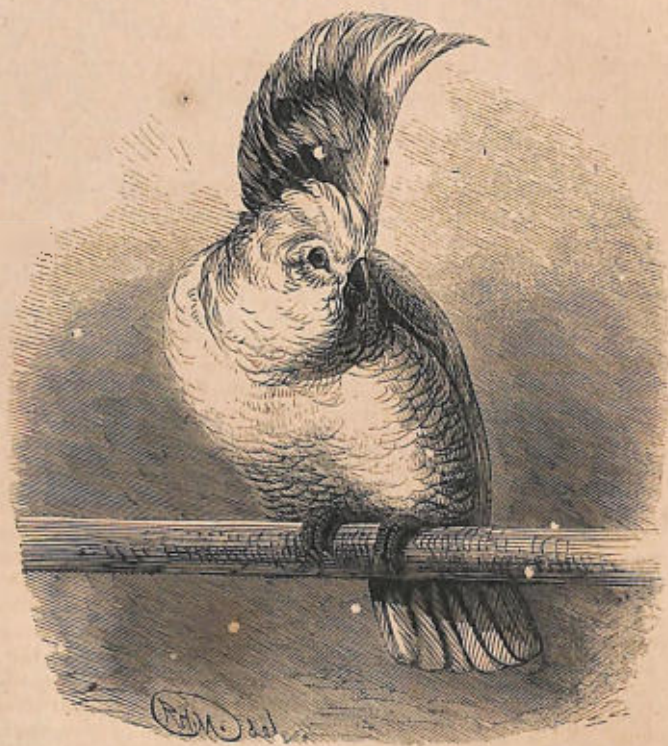
sent me into a fit of ungovernable laughter, still their evident delight at the cheerful warmth of her body, and the ready manner in which they nestled, overcame her first feeling of compunction, and she adopted them as if they were her own. Of course I had to do the feeding, and as the youngsters required their meals at least once an hour at the outset, the bantam hen and her adopted children were kept in a haagor and placed within easy reach, whilst my pockets contained a neat assortment of suitable food, which at regular intervals underwent the process of mastication, preparatory to being equally shared between my two baby cockatoos. The trouble was certainly great, but the results were perfectly satisfactory, and having previously reared a nest of English nightingales, the cockatoos were an easy matter by comparison, for I had to take the nightingales to bed with me, or at least to keep them at my bedside, and to feed them at intervals of an hour all through the nights. This was not necessary with the cockatoos, for a substantial meal the last thing—say eleven o'clock—served them until six o'clock the following morning.

This foster mother business is a serious tax upon your time and patience, but a man who expects to succeed in the foreign bird fancy must be possessed of the virtue above named, and have leisure in which to employ it, otherwise the results of his experiments will prove of a negative character. I feel most strongly that our Zoological Society but ill fulfils its purpose in this respect, and that, with the vast space which at present remains available, the domestication and reproduction of foreign birds ought to receive a very much larger amount of attention than has ever yet been paid to it. Even when any efforts are made in this direction the poor birds are kept in so-called "aviaries," with bare whitewashed walls and paved floors sprinkled with sand, and then, because the birds do not breed, we are told that they exhibit no inclination to do so in confinement. When kept under such conditions it would be something wonderful if they did, but I do contend that the superb collection of foreign birds possessed by our Zoological Society ought to be so housed as to afford them proper encouragement to nest, and I am confident that the result would add greatly to the attractions of the place, and also to our knowledge, to say nothing of doing away with that room of horrors which is at present dignified by the title of "Parrot House."

But to return to the Rosey Cockatoo, from which I have been tempted to wander in my zeal for the liberation of those poor, pent-up, screaming creatures in the Regent's-park Gardens. My young cockatoos were very slow of growth, and required assistance in feeding until quite three months old, for although they would pick up stray bits of food, yet they greatly preferred to have it from the fingers of their owner. The absurdity of the performance between their foster mother and themselves was highly amusing, for the bantam, who nursed them tenderly, would excite their hunger by picking up morsels of food and calling loudly to her adopted children, they immediately endeavoured to thrust their large beaks into her

month, at which proceeding she would appear utterly astounded, and looking inquiringly, first at one and then at the other big headed baby, she would take up the fallen scrap and go through the performance with similar results. The little black hen eventually abandoned all attempts to feed her strange chicken, but she was very much attached to them, and a quaint trio they looked when basking together in the sunshine, the hen dusting herself, and the youngsters climbing about her body, in the vain endeavour to escape a shower of grit with which they were every now and then assailed. The early plumage of these birds was less brilliant than that of the adult, and the breast was, moreover, largely mottled with grey, but at twelve months old there was nothing by which to distinguish them from birds four times their age. Rosy Cockatoos have had their day with me. I demonstrated the practicability of breeding them in this country, I petted them, studied them closely, made myself master of their habits and characteristics, and then passed them aside to concentrate my energies and attention upon some other species. I must plead a sailor's love of variety in extenuation of this weakness of mine, although it has led to a much more extended knowledge of birds than I should ever have acquired had I been less fond of new feathered friends.

As the directions for feeding and treatment of the Great White Cockatoo are equally applicable to the Rosy Cockatoo, it is not necessary for me to say any thing upon that subject; and, in conclusion, I must cordially recommend my Rosy friends to the bird-keeping community.



THE LEADBEATER COCKATOO.

(Cacatua Leadbeateri.)

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE LEADBEATER COCKATOO.

*Cacatua Leadbeateri* (Wagler).

*Phylolophus Leadbeateri* (Gould).

*Jack-kul-yak-kul* (Aborigines of  
West Australia).

*Pink Cockatoo* (Colonists of Swan  
River).

THESE birds are common to the interior of New South Wales, and they are the most brilliant plumaged and the most amiable of the cockatoo tribe. They measure 18in. in extreme length, from tip of crest to extremity of tail, and the body feathers are white, tinged with a rich shading of rose pink upon the head, neck, and under surface. The outer side of the wings and tail are also white, but upon raising them, all the inner edges of the feathers will be found of a brilliant rose colour for about two-thirds of their length. The beak is white and the eyes black and prominent, the head being surmounted by a crest of great beauty, which can either be opened fan-like or be closed at will. This superb crest consists of a double row of feathers, eighteen or twenty in number, and 5in. or 6in. in length; they are bright rose red at the base; then comes a yellow band an inch wide, running evenly across the whole of them, and another band of red half an inch wide above the yellow, leaving about an inch or more of pure white at the points of the feathers. This combination of colour is exceedingly beautiful, and when the bird raises his wings and throws up his crest at the approach of a stranger, his appearance never fails to receive a very large amount of outspoken admiration. The Leadbeater, however, has the common failing of his tribe, he is addicted to screaming; although, to do him justice, I must say that his sins in this respect are neither so frequent nor so heinous as those of any of the cockatoo family hitherto treated, and, indeed, when a bird of this species becomes thoroughly accustomed to those about him, there is very little to complain of in the matter of screaming, unless he gets teased by children or servants. This practice spoils most of the excitable birds of the parrot and cockatoo tribes, and although it may be very entertaining to see them get into a terrible passion, throw up their

wings and crests, and give vent to their wrath in shrieks of fiery indignation, still a bird that is provoked to such exhibitions of temper will soon become a nuisance to any household, and no amount of subsequent good treatment and petting will eradicate the tendency to give way to uncontrolled outbursts of passion upon the most trivial provocation.

The female may be recognised by the inferior size of her crest, and also by the yellow band in the centre of her crest being of a much deeper colour than that of her mate; there is also less pink upon her breast, but otherwise the plumage of the sexes is alike, and it is difficult to identify them except by comparison.

These birds have become tolerably plentiful in our market of late years, but they still command good prices, although the dealers speak very regretfully of the days—not long since—when 10*l.* was readily paid for a Leadbeater cockatoo.

My experiments in attempting to breed these birds have resulted in failure through accidents, and misfortune, and a splendid hen, upon whom my hopes were centred last spring, died upon her nest at the very time when success appeared to have been achieved. Her death was due to stoppage, and I had no idea that anything was wrong until I found her lifeless. These expensive disappointments are rather discouraging, and my bad luck, moreover, appeared in the accident last spring, for no less than three of my choicest birds died upon their eggs—thanks to easterly winds and late frosts.

The Leadbeater does not apparently possess any great ability as a linguist, although he can be taught a few expressions, and he will readily imitate domestic sounds, and *imitate* the dog and cat, as well as whistle very fairly.

FOOD.—Feed on hemp, Canary, crushed maize, and rap, giving nuts of various kinds, and biscuits, and fruits in season.

DISEASES.—The ailments of these birds may be treated similarly to the preceding species.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE GANG GANG COCKATOO.

<p><i>Ptilinopus galeatus</i> (Latham).  <i>Calyptorhynchus galeatus</i> (Vigors).  <i>Ptyctolophus galeatus</i> (Swainson).  <i>Banisterius galeatus</i> (Less.)  <i>Cacatua galeatus</i> (Le Vialant).  <i>Calocephalon galeatus</i> (Gray).  <i>Calocephalon australe</i> (Less.)</p>	<p><i>Psittacus phonicoccephalus</i> (Paris Muséum).  <i>Corydon galeatus</i> (Wagler).  <i>Calocephalon galeatum</i> (Zoological Society).  <i>Gang Gang Cockatoo</i> (Colonists).  <i>Red-crowned parrot</i> (Shaw).</p>
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NOTWITHSTANDING the formidable array of Latin names by which this bird is known, the species is by no means a common one in England, and specimens are rarely met with except as pets amongst returning colonists. The Gang Gang is a native of Van Dieman's Land, where it subsists upon seeds and berries. It congregates in small companies of six or a dozen, and leads a quiet and retired life, and are consequently looked upon with much less disfavour by the settlers than they show towards the other members of the same family. These birds are rather more than half the size of a grey parrot, and, like him, their body feathers are a light slate colour throughout, each feather being edged with a white lacing, the neck and head of the male Gang Gang is a rich crimson, and his head is surmounted by an erect crimson crest, of a thin silky character, extending from the nape of the neck to the base of the beak, the principal feathers being about two inches long and curly at the edges, the whole bending gracefully forward. The feathers forming the crests of these birds are utterly unlike those of any other cockatoo, for they resemble in miniature the feathers of an ostrich, the outer edges curling and the tops bending forward. The hen has a crest like her mate, but it is grey in colour; and the only contrast to the uniformity of this quaker-like shade is a slight blush upon her cheeks.

The Gang Gangs are gentle, quaint, little creatures, and I have known

the male bird to be taught a few words and to mimic domestic sounds, but the capacity of these birds does not appear to be of a very high order. At present they are not obtainable in the English bird market; but I believe we shall get them over eventually through the ordinary sources of supply, and as anything beyond a description of the birds would not be of any present service, I shall not extend this chapter beyond saying that these birds subsist upon hemp and seed, and their ailments are common to all the tribe.

## CHAPTER XL.

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### THE CITRON-CRESTED COCKATOO.

*Cacatua citrina cristata* (Zoological Society).

THIS is a very pretty little cockatoo, measuring barely 11 in. in length, its plumage being spotless white, with the exception of his graceful crest, which is of a rich citron yellow. He is a native of Timor Laut, but, unfortunately, specimens seldom reach us through the ordinary sources of supply, and this is the more to be regretted because these birds are much more docile and less excitable than their near relations, the Great White Cockatoo.

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## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE PHILLIP ISLAND COCKATOO.

*Nester productus* (Gould). | *Ptyctolophus productus* (Latham).

This extremely rare species was originally found in the small island from which the bird was named; but his numbers have steadily diminished as the population increased, until now the whole island might be searched without obtaining a single specimen of this parrot; indeed, the species is considered almost extinct. Of the long-billed parrots these are certainly the most capable of being taught, and the most gentle of disposition, although, like others, its body is squat-shaped, tail short, head small, and upper mandible of the beak disproportionately elongated. The upper body colour is hazel brown, head and neck tinged with greyish pink, which assumes a yellowish shading on the breast, and merges to a bright red upon the abdomen.

FOOD.—These long-billed cockatoos feed principally upon bulbs and roots, soft green leaves, and fruits of all kinds, and their beak is employed in searching for and digging up a supply of food. This must be borne in mind when keeping either this bird or the Long Billed White Cockatoo in confinement, where cabbage, lettuce, and fruit, are necessary to the maintenance of good health.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE LONG-BILLED WHITE COCKATOO.

*Psittacus nasicus* (Linnaean Society).

*Cacatua nasica* (Less.).

*Long-nosed Cockatoo* (Latham).

*Platystrophia tenuirostris* (Saww).

*Red-vented Cockatoo* (Brown).

*Long-billed White Cockatoo* (Gedney).

I confess to a feeling of dislike towards these birds, which nothing can overcome, not that I object to long nosed creatures as a rule, for nature has been somewhat liberal to me in the matter of nose: but these cockatoos are morose and spiteful in disposition, quarrelous, excitable, and uneasy in their manners when kept as cage pets, and strongly addicted to shrieking at all seasons. They are common to the whole of West Australia and New South Wales, where they prey upon the newly sown corn in flocks of thousands, and at other seasons of the year burrow for root and bulbs, with their long and powerful beaks, and make themselves a pest to all who cultivate the land. It is true that these birds eat the larvae of insects, and so repay the farmer something for their keep; but farmers are notoriously ungrateful to their feathered friends, and *Nasicus* gets no thanks for any good that he may do. The body colour of the bird is white, with a tinge of primrose upon the under surface of the wings and tail, and a few faint touches of pink here and there upon the breast and vent, from which it received the name of "red vented" from one naturalist. A circular patch of bluish skin surrounds the eye, and a blush of red crosses the base of the upper mandible and extends from ear to ear. The feathers upon the forehead are raised like a crest when the bird is excited. The species is a common one in this country, and may be obtained cheaply from any dealer, but I do not recommend it either as a cage or aviary pet.

The treatment is the same as directed for the PHILIP Island Cockatoo.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE RED-FACED WHITE COCKATOO.

*Cacatua Sanguinea* (Gould). | *Red-faced White Cockatoo* (Godney).

THIS is a closely allied species to the preceding, and although quite as common in this country now, yet its introduction is of modern date, and as a consequence no mention has been made of it by any writer except Gould, who called it the "blood-stained cockatoo." I have taken the liberty to rechristen this species, for beyond a red circle around the base of their long beaks, there is nothing approaching to a "blood-stain" upon the uniform white plumage of these birds. They are natives of the north and west coasts of Australia, and possess the characteristics of the *Nasicus*, being quarulous, noisy, and excitable as cage pets, and vicious when kept in an aviary. It is due to them to say that, when taken young, they become very strongly attached to those who pet them, and are capable of being taught a few words or even short sentences.

In addition to the ordinary parrot diet proscribed for the Amazons, give apples, radishes, cabbage, lettuce, and such like laxative food, without which these birds are very subject to fits, for all the long billed cockatoos in their wild state eat roots and bulbs.

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THE GOLIATH COCKATOO.

(*Microglossum aterrimum.*)

## CHAPTER XLIV.

### THE GOLIATH COCKATOO.

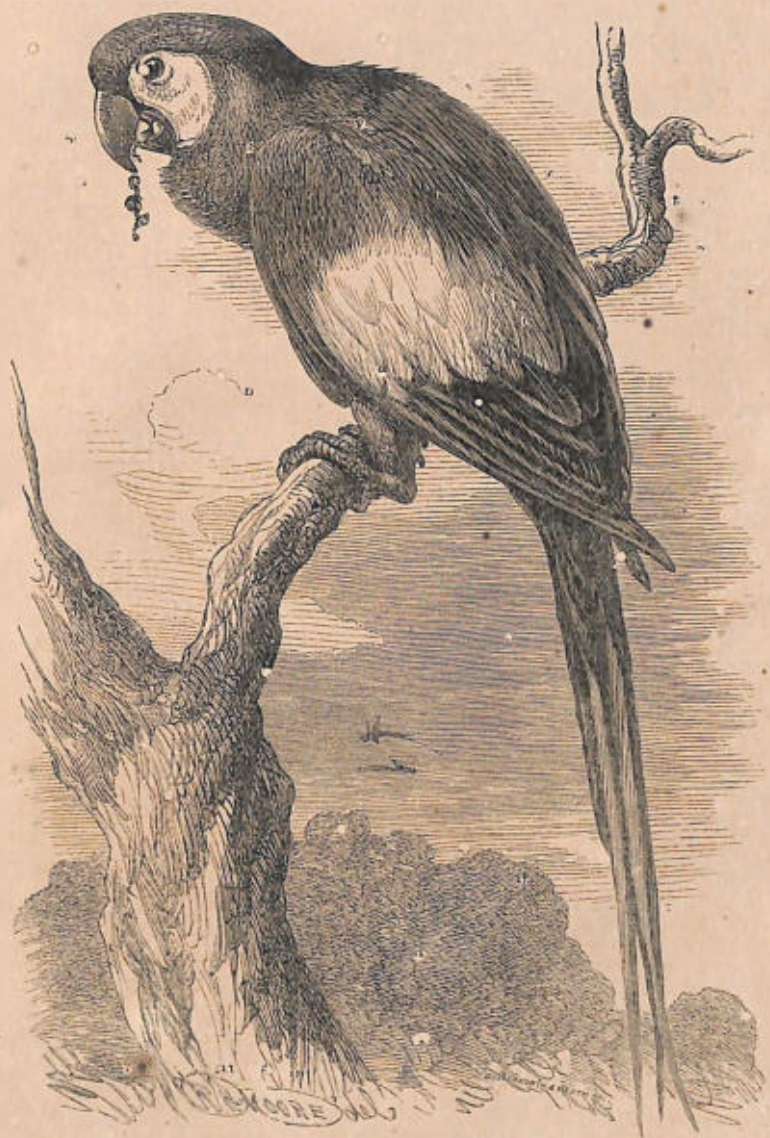
*Microglossum aeternum* (Gould).

THIS is an immense black cockatoo, equal in bulk to the great Macaw, but the species is so rare that, except a stray specimen now and then, we never see one brought to England. Those that do come into the market realise enormous sums for public collections, and a dealer would treat an offer of 25*l.* for one of these birds with contempt. They are natives of New Guinea and adjacent islands, and very little appears to be known of their habits in a wild state, although the formation of their beak and tongue differs so materially from the other cockatoos, that Goliath is evidently accustomed to a different mode of life. His tongue is long, tubular, and extensible, and his beak is immensely strong, the upper mandible being elongated and armed with a double tooth-like ridge on its cutting surface, which enables the bird to crack up a thick oak perch as if it were made of soft matchwood. The plumage is glossy, and the general appearance of the bird is striking, wild, and peculiar; his nature appears savage and unamiable, and, beyond his extreme novelty, there is nothing to commend him as a cage pet. In confinement the food of these birds is the same as that of the large white cockatoo.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE MACAW.

THERE are four species of the Macaw seen in England, viz., the Military Macaw, the Green and Scarlet Macaw, the Blue and Yellow Macaw, and the Dark Blue Macaw, the first named being the commonest, and the last named the rarest of the family. They are the most gorgious of the parrots, and may fairly be ranked as kings of that tribe, although they have fallen from their high estate in the estimation of English bird keepers; the fact being that these large birds are somewhat objectionable as pets, being vicious and noisy, and their excrement being particularly offensive. Although capable of repeating short sentences, their capacity is not very great, whilst their shriek is terribly loud and discordant, and a spiteful disposition towards children and strangers renders them anything but desirable pets. Egg production in confinement is by no means uncommon amongst Macaws, and although only one instance is recorded of their breeding and rearing young in an aviary, still I believe that to be due to the fact that no effort has been made; for where will you find a Macaw in England that has not his or her leg chained to a stand? The birds imported into England are invariably nestlings that have been reared by hand, but an old specimen can always be recognized by his battered exterior, annoying screech, and determined attempts to inflict grievous injury upon everybody and everything that comes in his way. Yes, an old trapped Macaw affords plenty of "raw material" upon which the advocates of "moral suasion," as a means of taming wild creatures, might very well try their hands. I knew one bird that defied every effort made to tame him, and he killed a bull terrier that shared his place in the stables; you could not live in the house with him! Both his wings were broken in this terrific battle, and a pretty spectacle the piece presented when the man went as usual to feed him in the morning. There laid poor Tyke dead, with his throat torn open, the bird covered with blood, and almost featherless stood by, with distended and drooping wings, a perfect scarecrow, shrieking at intervals either in pain or spite. What was to be done with the creature? Kill him, everyone said except the man who looked after the bird; so his



THE SCARLET AND BLUE MACAW.

(*Macrocerus macao.*)

belief that the injuries would tame him saved his life; and the cripple was consequently shut up in a pig sty. His wings got well, the bones growing out of place, but his old savage never abated one atom of his hatred for everyone that went near him, and he had ultimately to be imprisoned.

Never keep a macaw in a cage, because, if you do, his gorgeous tail will assuredly be spoiled, and the soiled condition of the cage will inevitably become a nuisance, no matter how great may be the attention bestowed upon its frequent cleansing. The securing of a strange bird to a stand is by no means an enviable job, but it is much simplified if you possess a properly prepared chain and ring. These are sold at most of the large bird shops in London, and it is better if possible to entrust to a dealer the work of fixing the ring and chain, as he will do it with less damage to the bird's plumage and infinitely less commotion and faster than would attend the operation in the hands of an amateur.

A T-shaped stand is the best, and the perch at the top should taper towards the ends, as the effects of a bird always grasping a perch of the same thickness throughout is likely to prove productive of cramp and diseased feet. Fasten the chain by means of a ring around the upright, and this will enable the bird to descend to the sand tray beneath in search of food that may have fallen, or of grit to assist the process of digestion. He is, moreover, fond of bathing, and a pan of water in the sand tray every morning affords him the means of thoroughly soaking himself and keeping his beautiful plumage free from parasites.

FOOD.—The food of the macaws when in a wild state consists almost exclusively of palm nuts, but in confinement the staple articles of diet should be hemp and canary seed, to which may be added all the little articles of luxury which usually fall to an Amazon parrot's share, and the general treatment should also be the same.

As these birds are very little sought after by English amateurs I do not propose to do more than give a brief description of the various species.

THE SCARLET AND BLUE MACAW (*Macawerus macao*).—This species formerly abounded in amazing numbers in the West Indian Islands, from whence we received large consignments of nestlings, but these birds have been "improved off" to such an extent by the planters that the species bids fair to become extinct. Waterton's description of this bird in a wild state is worth repeating: "Superior in size and beauty to any parrot of South America, the Ara will force you to take your eyes from the rest of animated nature to gaze at him; his commanding strength, the flaming scarlet of his body, the lovely variety of red, yellow, blue, and green, in his wings; the extraordinary length of his scarlet and blue tail, seem all to join and demand from him the title of Emperor of all the parrots. He is scarce in Demerara until you reach the confines of the Maonshi country; there he is in vast abundance. He mostly feeds on trees of the palm species. When the concourite trees have ripe fruit on them, they are covered with this magnificent parrot. He is not shy or wary, you may take your blow-pipe

and a quiver of poisoned arrows, and kill more than you are able to carry back to your hut. They are very voracious, and like the common parrots, rise up in bodies towards sunset, and fly two and two to their places of rest. It is a grand sight in ornithology to see thousands of Aras flying over your head, low enough to let you have a full view of their feeding manœuvres. The Indians find the flesh very good, and the feathers serve for ornaments in their head-dresses." The predominant colour of this bird is bright scarlet, the principal wing coverts are yellow, and the quill feathers bright blue, and the long tail feathers red tinged with blue, and the tail coverts pale blue. The beak is massive and sufficiently powerful to crack a peach stone with perfect ease. The cheeks are bare save a few minute feathers that form little lines across the face. We now receive our importations of this species chiefly from tropical South America, whence it derives the name of "Ara," which, in the language of the aborigines, expresses the loud cry uttered by these birds when seeking food in the dense forests of that country. The Indians often keep these birds as pets, and esteem their gorgeous feathers a most becoming head-dress.

**THE BLUE AND YELLOW MACAW** (*Macrocercus ararauna*).—This bird has become popular of late, and it certainly is a very gorgeous creature, although its colours are not so gaudy as those of the other species. A fully grown specimen will measure 3ft. in length, the upper body feathers being a beautiful Cambridge blue, whilst all the under part of the body is a rich orange yellow. These birds are natives of the West Indies, Guiana, the Brazils, and Surinam. The Blue and Yellow birds are generally credited with the possession of a more amiable disposition than the other species, but docility depends so much upon the early training of birds that no reliable inference could be drawn from the disposition of individual specimens, especially as the macaws sent to England have been reared by hand. Undoubtedly the plumage of the Blue and Yellow is the most strikingly beautiful, the contrast of the two colours being so remarkable, and I quite admit my own predilection for this species, although I am not fond of macaws. The beak is black and the bare skin of the cheeks is lined with minute stripes of black feathers. There is a black patch upon the throat, and the whole under part of the body is yellow and the upper feathers blue.

**THE RED AND GREEN MACAW** (*Macrocercus militaris*).—This species is a native of South America, and although not quite so large as some of the others, it is the most amiable and gifted of the tribe, and may be recognised from the preceding by the green feathers on the head, neck, and upper body. The forehead is crimson, the wings and tail coverts are blue, and the long tail feathers are brilliant red. This species is by no means common in England, although it is plentiful in Mexico and the western limits of South America. It is called by some writers the Great Green Macaw, and by others the Great Military Macaw. When taken

young and carefully reared, it becomes very docile, and exhibits greater powers of speech than I have ever witnessed in any kindred species, and it is, therefore, entitled to the favourable attention of those who keep these birds as pets.

**DARK BLUE MACAW** (*Macrocercus hyacinthinus*).—This is a closely allied species to the Blue and Yellow, and is found in the Brazil, although very scarce. The plumage of this bird is of an uniform Oxford Blue throughout, the tongue and corners of the mouth being bright orange yellow.

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