

A Trip to the Baudin Rocks.

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The Baudin Rocks are situated about six miles from Robe and about two miles from the north-west end of Guichen Bay. There are three islands, one a bare rock and two partly covered with a low scrubby growth, partly open ground with a carpet of a short samphire-like plant. The larger of these two is divided into three portions at high tide. Early in January of this year, through the kindness of Mr. Keith Bowman, I was able to pay a visit to these rocks. I wished particularly to see if any species of Petrel bred there, but found none, nor do I think the soil is anywhere deep enough to allow of burrowing. As we came up to a small beach on the first island, a number of Black-faced Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax gouldi*) flew from their nests in the low bushes on a small cliff. On landing we found about two dozen of their nests, new, but mostly empty, one only containing a full clutch of three eggs. Later on we saw a Silver Gull eating one of the eggs, which may account for the emptiness of the nests. At one end of the island is a large rookery of Crested Terns (*Sterna bergii*), made up of many thousands of birds. The eggs were so close together that care had to be taken to avoid treading on them. On two occasions nests were found containing two eggs each, so alike in marking that I think they were probably laid by one bird. Under the bushes Little Penguins were breeding in hundreds, the nest contents varying from two fresh eggs to full-grown young still in the down. One of these latter was captured and put into the water. It swam and dived as well as an old bird, though this was probably its first introduction to the sea. After its swim it made up the rocks to its home as nimbly as its parents could have done. On the second island was another huge colony of Crested Terns on one end, and at the other three isolated eggs, probably the start of a new colony. On this island were a number of Nankeen Night Herons (*Nycticorax caledonicus*), and I found one old nest with a dead young bird in it. The nest was built in the low bushes, nearly on the

ground. This was rather a surprise to me, as my previous experience of the nesting of these birds was in high gum-trees, well out of my reach. A few belated Silver Gulls (*Bruchigavia novae-hollandiae*) were nesting at the edges of the bushes, the nests containing only one or two eggs. The regular nesting season was long over, judging by the number of dead young gulls lying about. The only other birds seen were the Sooty Oyster-catcher (*Haematopus unicolor*), a pair of which hung about the corner of the island as though breeding there. I could not find either nest or young. The Little Grass Bird (*Megalurus gramineus*), which was in fair numbers in the bushes, was quite silent and evidently not nesting. About five o'clock in the evening a stiff blow came up and we had to leave the island in a hurry. Portions of the large island were not properly examined, and being densely covered with low bushes I think it likely that they may be the main nesting-place of the Nankeen Herons, many of which were seen there.
