

Trip Round the World—Notes on Sea Birds by the way.

By J. W. Mellor.

We started from Adelaide on 29th June, going via the Cape of Good Hope to England and thence across the Atlantic to New York, to Chicago, and on through Canada, across the Rockies, to Vancouver; thence to Honolulu, Fiji, New Zealand, Sydney, Melbourne, and back to Adelaide.

On the journey from Adelaide to Fremantle I noted the Wandering Albatross (*Diomedea exulans*) all the way, and also in less numbers the Sooty Albatross (*Phoebastria fusca*) and a great number of the Black-browed Albatrosses (*D. melanophrys*), which are easily distinguishable by their pure yellow bill.

After leaving Fremantle, being one day out, only one Black-browed Albatross followed us till dark, and a few Sooty Albatrosses, with white markings on the wings. Bird life became scarce as we got into the Southern Indian Ocean, shaping our course towards Durban; but at times we fell in with a few Albatrosses, there being an occasional Wandering Albatross, but the place of the Black-browed was filled by that of the Green-nosed Albatross (*D. chlororhynchus*), noticeable even at a distance by the much darker colour of the bill. When stormy weather prevailed a few Stormy Petrels, or Mother Carey's Chickens (*Pelagodroma marina*), were seen skimming along in the trough of the swell one moment, and at the next mounting to the crest of a billow and on again. Well out in the ocean several excep-

tionally white Albatrosses were noted, which appeared to be the Snowy Albatross (*D. chianoptera*), these being in company with the Wandering Albatrosses.

For a few days bird life disappeared, and then of a sudden a number of Wandering Albatrosses appeared as if they had come a long distance. They were very tame, soaring quite near to the ship, and right over our heads at the stern of the vessel. There was also one Sooty Albatross, but this was wild and wary. These followed us next day, when they were joined by a Green-billed Albatross (*D. chlororhynchus*).

On nearing the African coast at Durban the sea-bird life changed somewhat, and we fell in with some new forms, but the old Wandering Albatross kept with us. The new-comers were the Cape Hen (*Majaqueus aequinoctialis*), with its narrow rakish wings, in marked contrast to the broader-winged Southern Skua (*Stercorarius antarcticus*). The Southern Black-backed Gull (*Larus dominicanus*), which is very much the size and appearance of our Pacific Gull, but is blacker on the back, now appeared. On leaving Durban and running south to the Cape we again picked up the Black-browed and also the Green-browed Albatrosses, as seen on the coast of Australia, the yellow bill of the former and the much darker bill of the latter being easily distinguishable. Off Cape Agullas a number of sea birds followed the Suevic, being principally Black-browed Albatrosses. On arrival at Capetown the Wandering Albatrosses were following just outside and also a few Sooty Albatrosses. Cape Hens were plentiful. Also in the harbour there were swarms of Black-backed Pacific Gulls and Hartlaub's Gull (*L. hartlaubi*), the latter being somewhat like our Silver Gull in Australia. These two species were mixing together, and looking out for bread and other food thrown from the vessels. After entering the Southern Atlantic Ocean bird life became scarce, and a couple of days to the northwards the bird life ended right to England, a few Wandering Albatrosses and Black-browed Albatrosses being the last of the birds seen.

Across the Atlantic from Southampton to New York in December the weather was very stormy and exceptionally cold, inasmuch as the s.s. Ohio looked as though she had just come from the Arctic regions, with great icicles hanging from everywhere. There were no birds at all across this ocean. After crossing the United States and Canada, at Vancouver, British Columbia, more sea and water birds were met with, and it was interesting to see how tame the Herring Gulls (*Larus argentatus*) and the Glaucous-winged Gulls (*L. glaucescens*) were. They mixed together freely and followed the ships across the harbour,

and settled on all parts of the deck and upper gear to the extent that when an extra bird wanted to rest it knocked off a perching bird and took his place on the rails, etc. There were a number of young of both species about, noticeable by their mottled grey plumage. In the harbour between Vancouver and Victoria, British Columbia, I noted two species of Grebes, viz., Halboell's Grebe (*Colymbus halboelli*) and the Little Horned Grebe (*C. auritus*). There were also the Violet and Green Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax robustus*) and the Surf Scooter (*Oidenmia penicillata*). The Red-billed Merganser (*Merganser serrator*) was very plentiful, and could be seen perched on the logs in the harbour that were moored ready for sawing up. These birds were great divers. Little flocks would come out into the water, and of a sudden all would dive together, and come up in different directions, and then collect before diving again. A great storm was encountered a day out from Vancouver, when the wind reached a velocity of 80 miles an hour, and the waves were 70 feet high, and through this for three days the Aorangi, the largest motor-boat in the world, battled, but no bird life was seen, but on getting near to Honolulu a few Sooty Albatrosses followed us. The day after leaving Honolulu I saw a pair of blackish Terns, with white on the under-surface.

When off the lonely islets of the Horne Group a few Gannets of a dark colour with white heads and breasts were noted, and also a couple of small Terns.

At Fiji birds were scarce, and they were also noted as absent about New Zealand generally. At Auckland, however, some Pacific Gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) and Silver Gulls were seen in the harbour. Between Auckland and Wellington we made acquaintance again of the Wandering Albatross and a few Gannets (*Sula serrator*). On leaving Wellington the Pacific and Silver Gulls followed us for a while, but soon dropped out, and birds were absent until just getting to Sydney, when several Wandering Albatrosses, and a few Mutton Birds came in sight. Between Sydney and Melbourne birds were scarce, and also between Melbourne and Adelaide, Mutton Birds being the chief noted. I was much interested while crossing the Southern Indian Ocean midway between Fremantle and Durban, and the warmer waters, to note the Albatrosses following the Suevic all night. There were some Wandering Albatrosses and several very large dark ones. They could be seen by the aid of the moonbeams, and evidently were attracted by our bright lights, and kept to us right on till next day. The Wandering Albatross was seen practically right round the world.