

Review.

Contributed by a Member.

Australian Parrots, by Neville W. Cayley. Published by Angus and Robertson, Limited, 1938. Price, 12s. 6d.

Neville Cayley's long-awaited work on Australian Parrots has now been published, and, on reflection, one must confess a certain sense of disappointment that so many errors and oversights should have found their way into a book which must undoubtedly become a classic, and which is excellent in very many respects.

The question of nomenclature will doubtless cause a good deal of comment, but by adopting that used by Mathews in *Systema Avium Australasianarum*, Cayley very justly reproaches the Royal Australasian Ornithologists' Union for their unwarranted delay in revising their Checklist. However, one must charge the author with inconsistency when he follows Mathews in lumping together the Port Lincoln (*Barnardius zonarius*) and Twenty-eight Parrakeets (*B. semitorquatus*) and yet devotes a chapter to the "Uniform Parrakeet" (*B. barnardi crommelinae* (Mathews)), obviously nothing more than

an extreme variant of that very variable species the Mallee Parrakeet (*B. barnardi*).

The coloured plates are mostly excellent, and, as usual, the author succeeds in making his drawings most lifelike. It is, however, in some of the coloured figures that the worst errors have occurred. For instance, the female Swift Parrakeet is shown with a yellow, instead of a red, face; the Blue Bonnet portrayed is the rare red-vented variety, and even so is much too brilliant; the female Mulga Parrakeet (*Psephotus varius*) is altogether too brightly coloured; the typical Twenty-eight has not the yellow abdomen of the Port Lincoln; and the shape of the cheek patches in many of the Rosellas is misleading. Also, the female Scarlet-chested and Turquoise Parrakeets have been erroneously indicated in the Key, and one would have preferred to have seen the very-differently marked females of the Glossy and Banksian Cockatoos portrayed rather than the artificially-produced colour varieties of the Budgerygar, which should have been left to his book devoted to that bird alone.

As regards the letter-press, it is unfortunate that delays in printing have rendered some of it inaccurate by the time the book appeared. The hitherto-unpublished articles are interesting, and one could wish that the author had been able to get together more of such. The maps used to indicate distribution, an excellent idea, have been rendered confusing in some instances where the ranges overlap.

Speaking generally, one must congratulate the author on his effort and recommend it to all who are interested in Australian Birds in general. No one who has a particular interest in that fascinating group, the Australian Parrots, can possibly afford to be without it. It is the only published work entirely devoted to the group.
