

A Trip to North-West Australia.

PART II.

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On June 26th we drove to a water-hole where Pigmy Geese were said to be, but on arrival they proved to be Black-throated Grebes. At this place we saw the only Bronze-wing Pigeon of the trip. The only other pigeon seen was the Peaceful Dove, a very common bird, whose monotonous notes were heard from morn till night in all classes of country. Owls also were rare. We heard none of their calls, and the only one seen proved to be *Spiloglaux ocellata*. It seems to me to be quite worthy of specific distinction.

Finches, generally, were fairly common, but owing to the quantity of standing water they were much scattered and not so easily observed as in a drier season. We saw and collected the Long-tailed Finch, the Black-banded Finch, the Red-faced Finch, and the Chestnut-eared Finch. Neither the painted nor the Crimson Finch was seen, though both are said to be common enough in certain seasons. Pipits were fairly numerous on the plains, and a *Mirafra* was very common in the long grass; they were quite silent and kept to the grass until disturbed by the buggy or some one on foot. Only two quail-like birds were seen. They were most probably a species of *Turnix*; but though I carefully marked the spots where they settled I failed to flush them again. They appeared to be about the size of *T. velox*, but much darker in colour. We searched for a time for the Pheasant Coucal (*Centropus phasianus*), but failed to find it. These birds are said to have been quite common in past times, but are now very rare; probably they have been destroyed by the domestic cat gone wild. The same reason is given for the disappearance of the local opossum. Kangaroos, or rather wallabies, are

still very numerous. They are of the species *Wallabia agilis* and *Onychogale unguifera*, the latter with a curious nail-like appendage to the end of the tail. It also has a peculiar habit of hopping with the right fore-leg held out at right-angle to the body and giving a little squeak at each jump. Emus are quite rare; we did not meet with any throughout the trip. On January 29th Mr. Chalmers drove us to Meda on our way back to Derby. Here I found a chick of the Black-fronted Dotterel which had been caught on the banks of the billabong. This was the only species of Dotterel seen in the district. We also saw here two young Blue-mountain Parrots in captivity. They proved to be *Trichoglossus rubitorquis*, and were fairly common in the gum-tree country. We left Meda at 5.45 next morning and breakfasted about nine miles out on the Derby track at Native Well, where many Long-tailed Finches were drinking. Further on, in the sandy country, several Black-headed Pardalotes were flushed from their burrows in the bare sand. In the sandy country grows a eucalyptus known locally as "woolly butt," some of which were ablaze with beautiful reddish-orange blossoms, among which the Sordid Friar birds were revelling. Black-throated Butcher birds were also numerous, and their beautiful song could be heard all along the track. At Derby Mr. Monger kindly lent us his partner's house, where we camped, having our meals at the hotel. The next two days were spent in packing up and saying good-bye to friends. On July 2nd we left Derby in the s.s. Gorgon, feeling that we had barely scratched the natural history of the district; indeed, six months, or even a whole year, could be spent there with profit. Between Derby and Broome many sea snakes were seen; they were of two species, one dull yellow, and the other banded with dull red. They are very conspicuous objects in the water and very sluggish in their movements. They are said to be venomous and I should think that is so, otherwise they would long since have been exterminated by the Gannets. About twelve hours after leaving Broome the ship was found to be on fire in the after-hold, and the course was altered to "back to Broome;" but about midnight the fire was considered under control and the captain decided to make straight for Fremantle without calling anywhere. Conditions were very unpleasant, as the fire had reached some cyanide of potassium in the hold and the whole of the ship reeked in cyanide fumes. Many of the cattle which were between decks were poisoned and had to be thrown overboard. On July 5th we passed through great flocks of Brown Gannets and a few Masked Gannets. We were at the time not far from Bedout Island, a great nesting-place of these

two species. On July 6th I developed malaria, and took little further interest in natural history—indeed, beyond a number of whales off Dirk Hartog Island, not much of interest was seen until we landed at Fremantle on July 9th, where I was only too glad to get off the ship and into bed at our hotel in Perth:
