

## A Central Australian Expedition

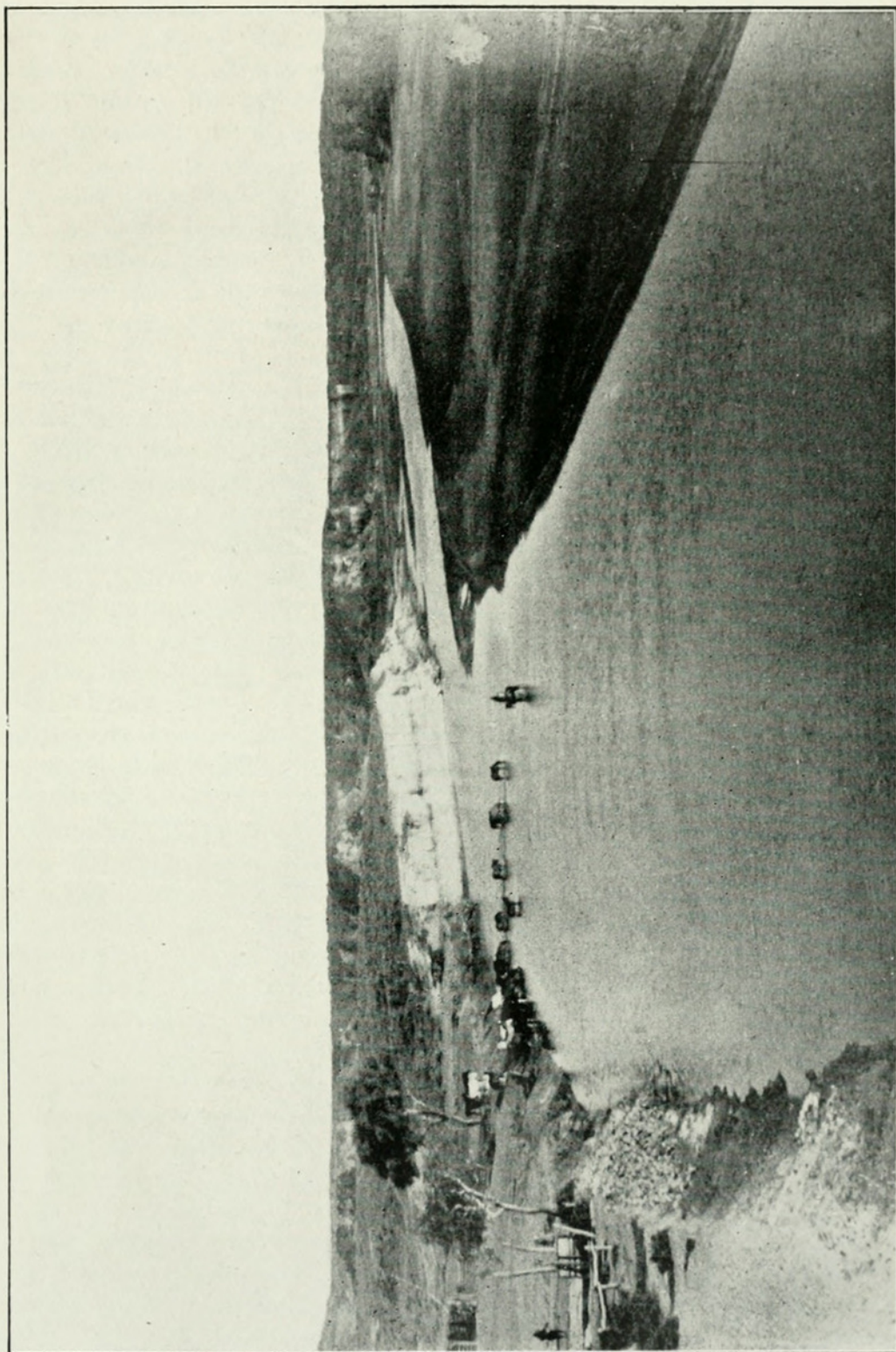
By Captain S. A. WHITE, C.M.B.O.U., C.F.A.O.U.,  
State Secretary R.A.O.U., S.A.

Quite a number of years ago, the Australasian Association for the Advancement of Science discussed the necessity of sending scientists into Central Australia to clear up some doubts centred round a spot called Yellow Cliff on the Finke River. Sir Douglas Mawson proposed that two geologists should carry out this work. Prof. Sir Edgeworth David, D.S.O., F.R.S., F.G.S., etc., of the Sydney University, and Prof. Walter Howchin, F.G.S., of Adelaide, were selected for the investigation.

The author of this paper, having traversed the country in question more than once previous to this trip, was called into consultation with the geologists, the outcome being that all arrangements and organising were left in his hands. The first move was with regard to transport. Upon approaching Sir Sidney Kidman, he, in his characteristic broad-minded and public-spirited way, said, "I will do what I can for you. If you can do the trip by car, you can have the one at Macumba Station; if not, you shall have a waggonette and as many horses as you like." Final arrangements were made by the writer with Sir Edgeworth David in Sydney when on my way up to Brisbane last May. On 17th June, 1921, Sir Edgeworth David arrived in Adelaide, and we should have left on the 22nd by the fortnightly train to the head of the line at Oodnadatta; but, on the 18th, the expedition was postponed owing to the extraordinary reason that there had been *too much rain*. The news of heavy falls of rain reached me late in the evening, and the outcome was that the start was put off till the next train in two weeks' time. The time before starting was taken up by Sir Edgeworth in the examination of most interesting geological centres within a few hundreds of miles of Adelaide.

On July 6th Prof. Sir Edgeworth David, Prof. W. Howchin and the writer left by the Great Northern train. The expedition had a double objective. In the first place there was the examination of some remarkable glacial deposits at Yellow Cliff, on the Finke River, at Crown Point, and, secondly, the investigation of the sandstone strata, an important intake of the Great Artesian Basin. After travelling all day, the train reached the picturesque little town of Quorn in the evening. Starting early next morning, a special car was arranged to trail behind, forming an observation car, and giving the geologists good opportunity of observing the wonderful country through which we passed. Exclamations of wonder came from the great geologist as we wound our way through and along the wonderful peaks of Flinders Range. Leaving Maree in the early morning of the third day, we were travelling still northwards. The effects of the wonderful rains were more and more apparent. Where the writer had experienced miles upon miles of drift sand, and where the





Crossing the Finke River, Central Australia.

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.





train had been held up till the sand had been removed from the rails, waving grass, herbage and wild flowers now covered the landscape. A few birds were seen—Bustards, Wedgetailed Eagles, Crows, Brown Hawks, Kites, Rose-breasted Cockatoos (in small flocks), and, on the clay pans and creeks, Ducks of several species, White-fronted and White-necked Herons and Avocets. Many of these birds rose at the approach of the train. That evening we arrived in Oodnadatta, and the following morning were very busy preparing for the trip. At 2 p.m., Mr. E. R. Kempe arriving with a car, we made a start to the North-East, and arrived at Macumba Station, owned by Sir Sidney Kidman, and ably managed by Mr. E. R. Kempe. Mrs. Kempe gave us a hearty welcome. The next day was spent by the geologists in looking round the country near the station, and the writer had his time fully occupied in preparing for a start on the following day.

At an early hour on 11th July, the horses were brought in, and five were harnessed up to a strong four-wheeled conveyance. As soon as the black boys let the horses' heads go, they were away with a bound, and we had made a start on our trip to the North. The itinerary for the trip was made out before leaving, and agreed to, and now it was a matter of keeping to the timetable as closely as possible, because Sir Edgeworth David was due back in Sydney at a stated time.

Macumba Station is situated on Yardaparinna Creek, and we followed this to the northward, with 25 loose horses in charge of two black boys. The chief vegetation along the creek was Stinking Acacia or Gidyea (*Acacia cambagia*), and amongst these low trees were noted the Pallid Cuckoo, Rose-breasted Cockatoos, Crested Bell Birds, the White-face, Crows and other birds. Striking the Macumba Creek, we met with several large waterholes, on which were numbers of Maned Geese or Wood Ducks, also Grey Teal. The water had started to dry up, leaving great masses of Nardoo (*Marsilia quadrifolia*) to fruit before the hot winds set in and scorched it all off. When growing in the water, the leaves of this plant—the "Clover Fern"—resemble four-leaved shamrock, floating on the surface after the manner of the leaves of the water lily. It is a most interesting plant, for it is found to-day living in the same form as that in which ancient rocks of Devonian age contain it in a fossilised state. Crossing the wide sandy bed of the Alberga River, which was now drying up (there being but waterholes here and there along its course), we then crossed the Stevenson Creek, and pulled up for the mid-day meal in the sandy bed near a fine waterhole. All these water courses are lined with fine red gums (*Eucalyptus rostrata*), and the birds were numerous, especially Mrs. Morgan's Parrot (*Barnardius zonarius myrtae*), Yellow-throated Miner, White-fronted Herons or Blue Cranes, Tennant's Maned Geese, Grey Teal, Red-backed Kingfisher, Mudlarks, Whistling and Little Eagles, Kestrels, and Cloncurry Honey-eaters. After the meal, a fresh team of horses was put in, and we were off



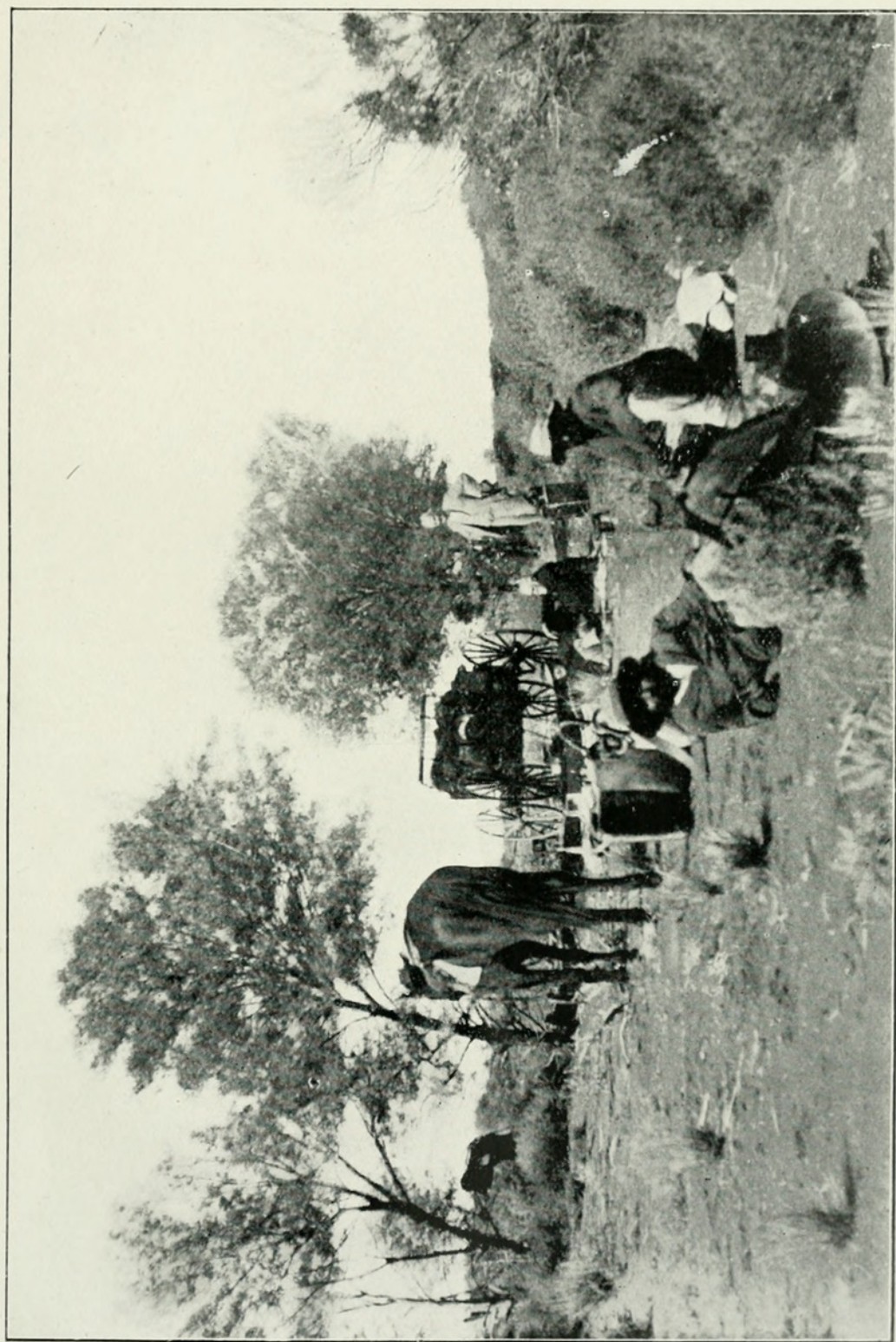
again into some heavy sandy country, which took some pulling to get through to reach the Ten-Mile Bore. A short halt was called here to examine the hot water coming up from the Great Artesian Basin. Continuing our journey, we followed the Stevenson Creek, pulling up at Willow Well for the night. In addition to the birds already mentioned as having been seen during the day, the following species can be added:—Pelican, White-necked or Pacific Heron, White-fronted Heron, Pipits, Black-fronted Dotterels and Red-browed Pardalote. This was the first night out in the open, and I was glad it was a mild one for my companions' sake, for they are well advanced in years. The glass fell only to 45, which is quite a mild temperature for the time of year. Boobook Owls and Nightjars were calling during the evening.

Making an early start next day, we reached Hamilton Bore at mid-day, and used up two teams of horses to get there, and with two more teams reached the Dove or Opossum Creek, where we went into camp for the night close to a fine water-hole, on which ducks sported all night long, in spite of our bright camp fire so close to them. Mosquitoes worried us badly all day as well as night, and our horses suffered much from them. Bird life was plentiful in the country around us. Mrs. Morgan's Parrot, Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes, Pallid Cuckoos, Black-throated Butcher Birds, both the Orange and Tricoloured Chats, Grey Teal, Black and White Fantail, White-fronted Herons, Shell Parrots, were noted. Boobook Owls and Nightjars were calling all along this creek. The nights were still keeping mild, for 46 was the lowest reading.

Next morning two horses were missing, and we left one of the black boys to track them down and bring them along. Driving along the creek that morning with the bright sunlight shining upon the gum tops, the latter, as usual, lining the banks of this water course, one could not but be filled with admiration. Owing to the grand rains during the last twelve months, the growth on these tree tops was wonderful, but the coloration of these young succulent leaves was beyond description, and could only be described by the artist's brush, for they shaded from pale greens and yellows to orange, and then from pale brown to pink and all shades of red. Along this timbered creek were observed Tennant's Maned Geese, Black Duck, Grey Teal, Southern Stone Plover, Banded Plover, Mrs. Morgan's Parrot, Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes, Pallid Cuckoos and Pipits.

We reached Blood's Creek for lunch, where the manager of Eringa—another of Sir Sidney Kidman's properties—brought seven more horses. The boy did not catch up with the two stragglers, so on we went after lunch. Reached the Adminga Creek for night camp, and during the evening the boy and two lost horses came along. Each day the writer collected many botanical specimens, for the whole country was a picture of waving grass, herbage, and wild flowers everywhere. The night was a little cooler, 39 deg.





A mid-day halt in Central Australia.

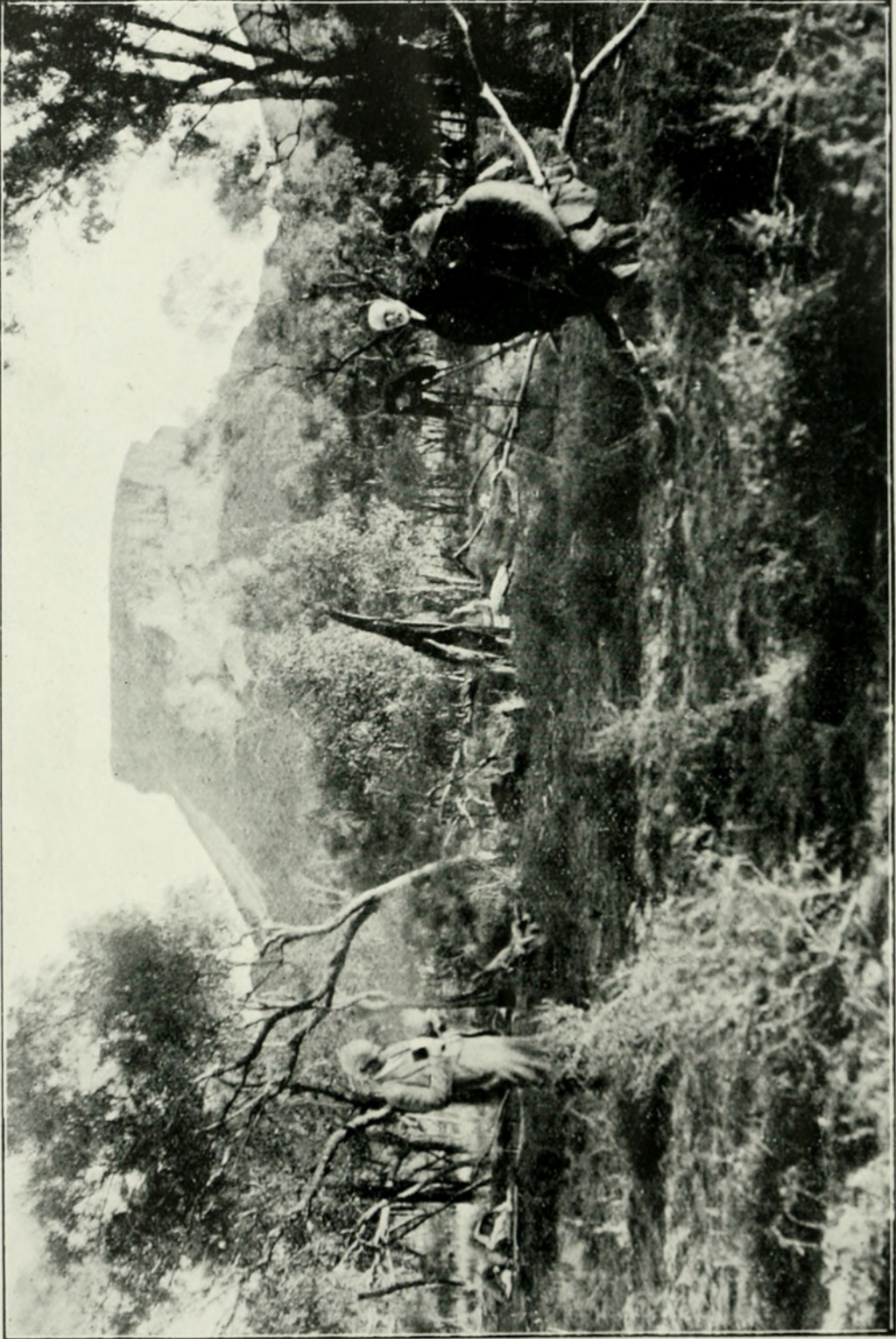
Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.











Crown Point Mountain, Central Australia.

Professor Howchin

Sir Edgeworth David

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.



Next morning, the 14th, we got an early start, and passed over rough, stony tablelands, but even this country was covered in a wealth of plant life all in full bloom. At 9.15 a.m. we crossed the boundary line into the Northern Territory. Australian Dotterels and Desert Chats were seen amongst the gibbers, on the stony tableland country.

We reached Charlotte Waters telegraph station at 11.30 a.m. Here we picked up a consignment of stores, which the writer had sent on by camels some time before. Letters were posted, and telegrams despatched. After a change of horses, we went on for another seven miles and camped on a box flat for lunch. This flat was covered in high grass, and many botanical specimens were collected here. A fresh team was harnessed up, and we plunged into heavy sand, and by 3 p.m. a fresh team was again in request. Late in the afternoon we came upon a drover's camp. Messrs. A. Ross and Tapp were on their way from Newcastle Waters to the head of the line in charge of 2000 head of cattle. We made Boggy Flat for camp that night, and not long after sunset a male Bustard started his harsh, grinding call, resembling a camel's cry. In the distance this went on for many hours well into the night. The night was mild, 40 degrees, although the day was very hot. Many birds were seen—Crested Pigeons, Red-backed Kingfisher, Pipits and many others. Had a good start the following morning, and with two teams reached Green Waterhole, on the Finke River, at 11.20 a.m. The geologists examined the country here, and we then moved on to Yellow Cliff, which rises out of the Finke. This was one of the objectives of the trip. Sir Edgeworth David described this as "a stupendous glacial phenomenon" on a very grand scale, and said, "Nothing was seen on the South Polar explorations in which I took part on such a magnificent scale as that which presents itself at Yellow Cliff: even the word 'stupendous' seems inadequate."

In 1913 the writer experienced great heat (125 deg. in the shade) at this spot, and the country was in the grim grip of drought, yet millions of years ago this very place was held fast in thick-ribbed ice—a wonderful country indeed. Half a day was spent here, and when the writer had made camp, etc., he busied himself with bird observations within the bend of the river, which was running a good stream.

Cockatoo Parrots were very numerous, mostly young birds, which had congregated in large flocks. Mrs. Morgan's Parrot, Ground Cuckoo-Shrikes, Little Falcons, Kites, Whistling Eagles, Shell Parrots, Cloncurry Honeyeaters, Tricoloured Chats, Yellow-throated Miners, Screech Owls, Boobook Owls, Night Herons, Stone Plovers and Nightjars were also noted. That night in the valley of the Finke was cold, the glass falling to 36 deg. F.

Next morning we made a start for further north, and passed Old Crown Point. We took photographs of the wonderful Crown Point mountain. Crossing the Finke here, we stopped



for lunch on the high ground, and going on in the afternoon again crossed a big bend in the river, and struck it again at Horseshoe Bend at 4 p.m. A large piece of the bank and many trees had been carried away by recent floods; in fact, many of my old landmarks of former trips have disappeared. Sir Edgeworth was greatly interested in this weird place. It was a cold night, the thermometer recording 34 deg. F.

Next morning our horses had gone back, and it was late before they turned up. This was owing to the bad nature of the fodder in this locality. We left on our return journey at 11.40 a.m. Pulled up for lunch at 12.30. Geologists examined many places during the afternoon. We went through Cunningham Gap at 4 p.m., and crossed the Finke and made camp at the foot of Mount Crown Point. Black-throated Butcher Birds were calling loudly here. The night was cold (36 deg. F.) We were still in the valley of the Finke.

Next morning, the geologists worked round the camp for a few hours, and made some geological discoveries. I took my camera and walked on a few miles to a blacks' camp, and was very fortunate to get some good photographs of some wild men who had just come in from the back country. The good season had unfortunately enabled these men to travel over country which in normal times is practically waterless. These natives were making their way to Crown Point Station. It is most regrettable that they were able to leave their own country, for this is the undoing of them.

Prof. Howchin made a good discovery that morning of new glacial indications further up stream.

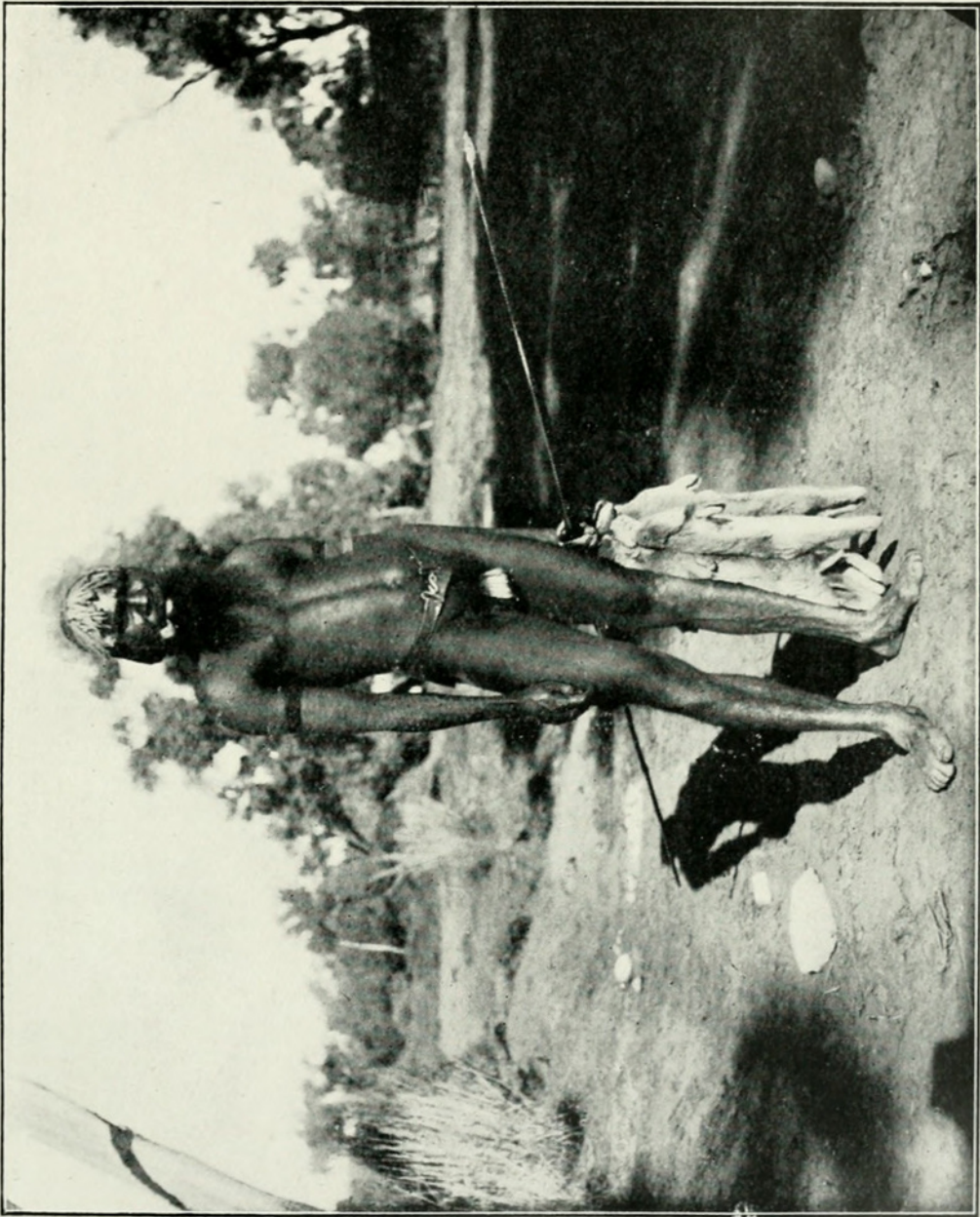
Getting away late, we made a forced drive to Black Rock, where we had our mid-day meal, and with one change of horses reached our old camp at Boggy Flat that night. We heard the same old Bustard calling in its strange, grinding noise well into the night. There was a very heavy dew through night, and the thermometer fell to 36 deg. F.

Next morning we had a good start, and when crossing the flat drove within twenty yards of a fine male Bustard; no doubt the bird which had made so much noise each time we had camped in the vicinity. We now struck out to the east to go round by New Crown Point Station on the Finke. On our way along the river bank, quite large parties of Red-breasted Babblers were met with, and went off chattering loudly, and following one another in their strange way. Other birds were plentiful, such as Black-faced Wood-Swallow, Kites, Pipits, Crows, and Australian Dotterels, which were breeding.

At mid-day we were delayed bolting up the conveyance. The fearful bumping it received nearly shook it to pieces.

Charlotte Waters telegraph station was reached in the afternoon, and we sent wires down south. The officer in charge kindly entertained us to tea and cake, and seemed glad to see someone he could converse with. This station has the lowest average rainfall in Australia,  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches. This year it has had over 20 inches.





A Central Australian Native and his catch.

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.

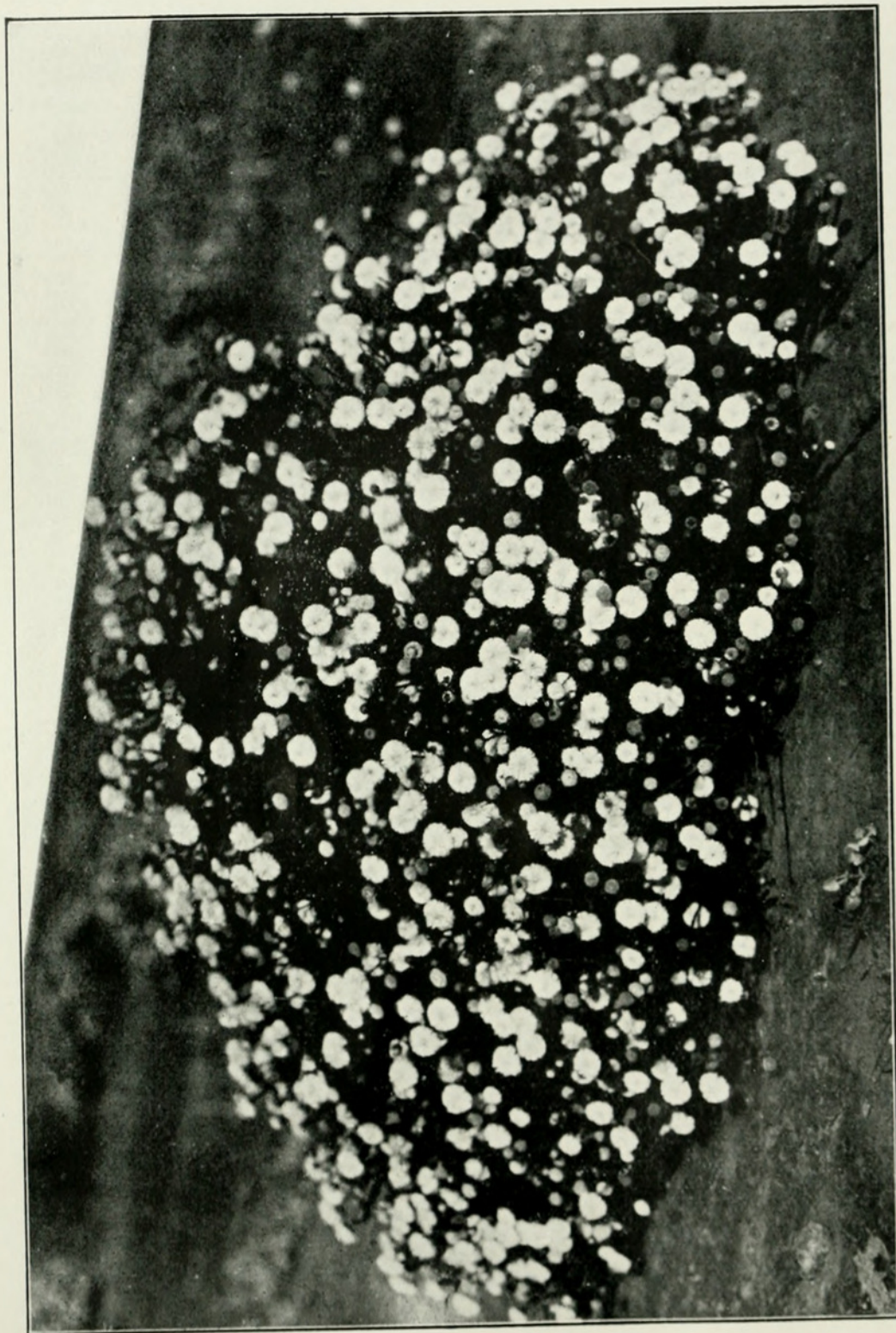












A Central Australian Blue Aster.

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.



We continued on our way across the tablelands to Bullocky Creek, where we went into camp amongst the Gidyea trees. The Desert Chat, Australian Dotterel, and Black-faced Wood Swallow were seen during the afternoon.

Our route next day led us over very rocky country. The geologists examined many outcrops, and discovered fossils in the rocks. Acres and acres of a beautiful daisy plant were met with, and photographs were taken. Descending from the high tablelands, Blood's Creek was reached at lunch time, and we pushed on after that to Opossum Creek (the head waters; not the lower end where we camped on our outward journey). We had a very snug camp here amidst thick Gidyea trees on the bank of a fine waterhole. Saw Little Falcons, Australian Dotterels, Pied Honey-eaters, Tricoloured Chats, Pipits, Tennant's Maned Geese and Grey Teal. There were some beautiful flowering shrubs in full bloom, notably *Erimophilas* and *Cassias*. The night temperature here was mild (44 deg. F.). All the next morning was spent traversing stony country. We reached Dalhousie at mid-day. After lunch we drove up to the Mound Springs, five miles distant, and the geologists spent the afternoon amidst the wonders of that mound-spring area, which comprises a hundred or more springs (some now inactive). The water temperatures vary very much from tepid to almost boiling point. The waterfowl have a great liking for these warm waters. Ducks of several species were found in hundreds upon the springs, and when alarmed flew up, but soon returned. My old camps in 1913 and later were easily picked out, for there is little change in this country from when I first saw it. The Purple-backed Wren was seen in the rushes round some of the springs, and Spiny-cheeked Honey-eaters were very plentiful. Black Moor Hens as well as Tennant's Maned Geese, Mountain Duck, Black Duck, Grey Teal, and Pink-eared Ducks were observed on the waters. As evening approached we made our way out of one of the greatest wonderlands of the North. On our way back, the writer made a valuable geological discovery—a large ice-marked boulder. This glacial evidence at Dalhousie is new to geological science. This night at Dalhousie was still milder, for the temperature did not fall below 50 deg.

Next morning, Sir Edgeworth David left camp at daylight to examine some cliffs a few miles to the west, and came back after sunrise with some wonderful fossils, of which he was very proud. That morning the sunrise was wonderful—one that can only be seen in a semi-desert country. Making a late start, we pushed on with speed, and with table-topped hills all round us. Later we rose on to tablelands, with numerous clay pans full of water, on which were great numbers of Avocets, accompanied by their young in grey plumage. We halted for the mid-day meal in the sand hills, which were covered with wild flowers and flowering shrubs. Again we passed on to stony tablelands, where Australian Dotterels were numerous. Around some of the clay pans a beautiful blue Aster was growing and blossoming in profusion.



We reached the Ten-Mile Bore at 4.30 p.m., and went into camp, for our conveyance had to be repaired again. Brown Hawks, Orange-fronted Chats, Yellow-rumped Tits, Black-breasted Larks, Crows and Black-throated Butcher Birds were seen during the day. The temperature fell that night to 36 deg.

We were on the move before daylight next day, and the steam produced by the hot water escaping from the bore rose in a thick cloud all around. We made good progress next day, and found the sandhill country as well as the tablelands ablaze with wild flowers and bright green grasses and herbage. Many of these plants, which were not even budding at the time of our outward journey, were now in full bloom or going off. The great masses of many-coloured Swainsonias or Pea plants were very lovely. Birds were numerous, and included Caterpillar-eaters, Black-faced Wood-Swallows, Tricoloured Chats, Yellow-throated Miners, Mrs. Morgan's Parrots, Pipits, Red-browed Pardalotes, Herons, and Ducks of several species. After lunch, a fresh team was harnessed up, and we were in at Macumba Station at 4 p.m., and received a warm and hospitable welcome from Mrs. Kempe and her sister.

We rested on Sunday, 24th, and the next day Mr. Kempe motored us in to Oodnadatta to catch the fortnightly train for Adelaide and home.

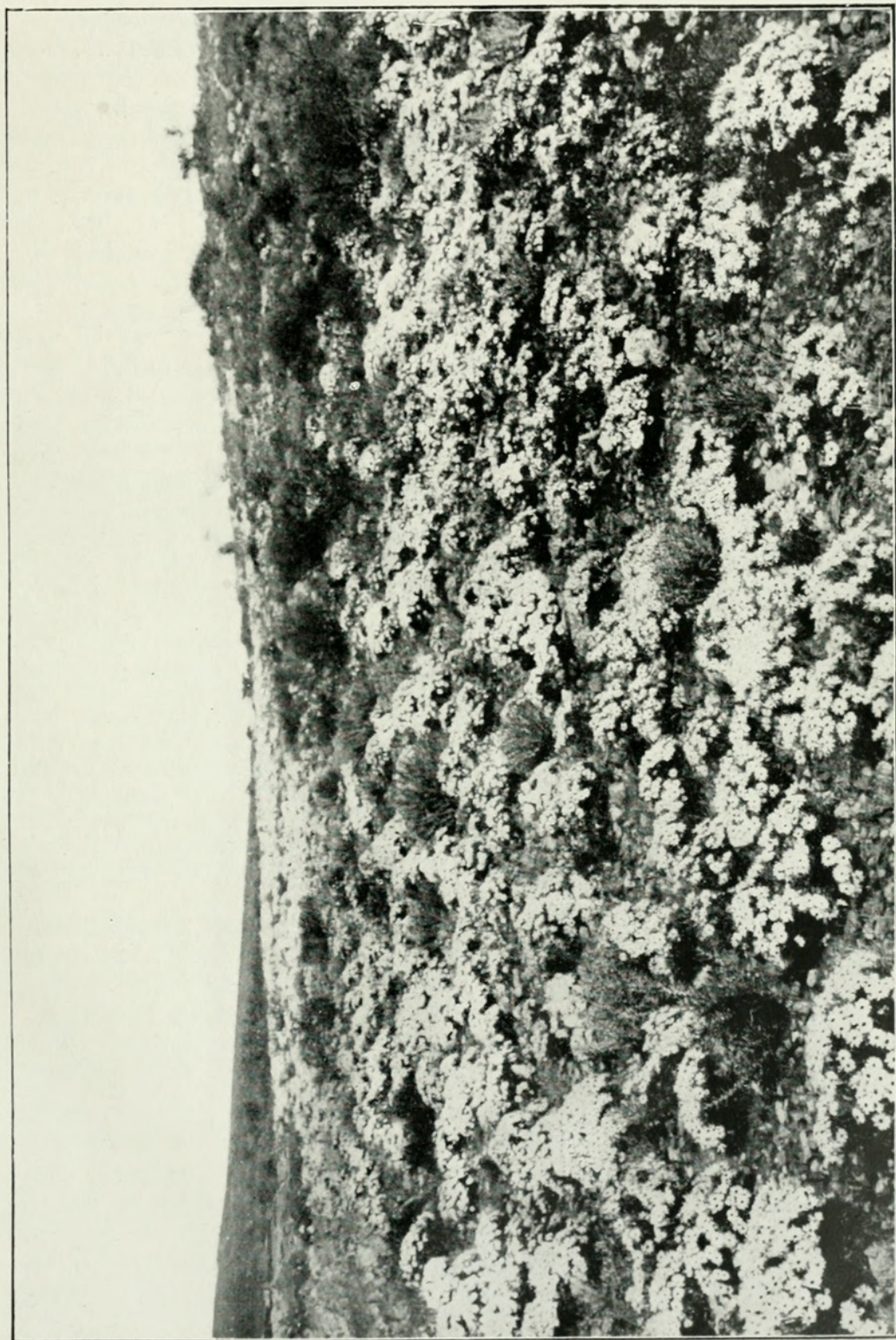
Our special rail car being ready for us at the head of the line, we went to bed on board, and at an early hour next morning the train moved off from Oodnadatta. The three days' rail trip came to an end at Adelaide, and so did a very wonderful trip. To travel with Sir Edgeworth David was a treat in itself, for never have I met such a lovable nature or more courteous English gentleman, and to see the central regions at that time was to see them as they have never been seen before. Unfortunately this will not last long for hot winds and dust-storms have already (at the time of writing) set in, and it is only the matter of a few weeks when all the annuals will have become dried up and blown away, and a condition of mild drought will prevail, perhaps for a considerable time.

An appendix follows this in the shape of a list of the birds identified on the expedition. The nomenclature is that of the practically agreed on second edition of the Official Check-list:—

#### NOTES CONCERNING THE BIRDS IDENTIFIED BY THE SIR EDGEWORTH DAVID, PROF. HOWCHIN AND S. A. WHITE EXPEDITION INTO CENTRAL AUS- TRALIA, JULY, 1921.

1. *Dramaius novæ-hollandiæ*. Emu.—Only one seen during the trip. Seeing the large tract of country covered, this is remarkable.
2. *Turnix velox*. Little Quail.—Numerous in many districts.
3. *Geopelia cuneata*. Diamond Dove.—Numerous along all the creeks.
4. *Phaps chalcoptera*. Bronze-winged Pigeon.—Only an occasional bird seen.





Daisies in a good season in Central Australia.

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.





5. *Ocyphaps lophotes*. Crested Pigeon.—Very numerous over all the country traversed. We often flushed these birds, and they flew to the first branch. Raising their tails, they looked as if they would over-balance. They depressed their tails to regain their balance, and raised their crests.

6. *Microtribonyx ventralis*. Black-tailed Native-Hen.—A small party or two of these birds was seen. No doubt, owing to the good season they are widely distributed.

7. *Gallinula tenebrosa*. Black Moor-Hen.—These birds were seen at Dalhousie Springs, and when disturbed took to the water to escape to the other side, and disappear in the reeds and rushes. Not common.

8. *Fulica australis*. Australian Coot.—Observed on the springs at Dalhousie.

9. *Podiceps ruficollis*. Black-throated Grebe. Seen on many of the waterholes both in South Australia and Northern Territory.

10. *Lobibyx novæ-hollandiæ*. Spur-winged Plover. Not a plentiful bird. A few pairs seen out on the plains.

11. *Zonifer tricolor*. Black-breasted Plover.—More numerous than the preceding species; still not plentiful. A pair was seen here and there on the trip, and by their actions in chasing crows and other birds, one could safely say that they were breeding.

12. *Charadrius melanops*. Black-fronted Dotterels.—A plentiful bird throughout the country. It is found along the margins of all waterholes and clay pans, and its sharp and distinctive call was heard throughout the night. This bird should not be placed in the same genus as the Red-capped Dotterel (*C. ruficapillus*), for it is a distinctive bird in every way.

13. *Recurvirostra novæ-hollandiæ*. Red-necked Avocet.—These birds were in numbers on the Tableland claypans, where they had rested this year; nearly every pair had three young ones with them. The young were feathered, and all the upper surface was of a light mottled grey, and the under surface was white. At first glance one would think that many Sharp-tailed Stints were dodging about amongst the Avocets. The young birds kept up a low but continuous call as they followed the parent birds about in the shallow water; they seemed to be calling all the time except when a parent bird was placing food in their mouths, and then smothered calls would be heard.

14. *Burhinus grallarius*. Southern Stone Plover.—These birds were widely distributed through the central regions, and there was hardly a night that they were not heard.

15. *Eupodotis australis*. Australian Bustard.—Not plentiful by any means; only an odd bird was seen here and there. A party of five was seen from the railway train just before we reached William Creek. A fine old male bird kept up his strange, harsh, grinding cry for the greater part of two nights during our outward camp and return journey at Boggy Flat—an indication that they were breeding.

16. *Notophox novæ-hollandiæ*. White-fronted Heron.—A common bird all through the country wherever there was water. It seemed to be getting much food from the rapidly drying claypans.

17. *Notophox pacifica*. White-necked Heron.—This bird was found all over the country visited, in ones and twos along the creeks; often it perched on the trees overhanging the waterholes.

18. *Nycticorax caledonicus*. Australian Night-Heron.—Often met with roosting in the big gum trees near the river banks, and heard at night when in search of food.

19. *Chenonetta jubata*. Tennant's Maned Goose.—Very plentiful. There was not a single waterhole of any size that did not have these



birds upon it, and at night their strange calls came from every point as they were passing from one water to another. We did not see any signs of breeding, but they may have started early in the year, when good rains fell.

20. *Casarca tadornoides*. Mountain Duck.—A few of these birds were seen at the Dalhousie Mound Springs.

21. *Anas superciliosa*. Black Duck.—Fairly numerous, and there were many young birds.

22. *Virago gibberifrons*. Grey Teal.—This bird was very plentiful both on the creeks and out on large claypans.

23. *Malacorhynchus membranaceus*. Pink-eared Duck.—Not very numerous. One bird observed at a crab hole must have had a nest in the grass close by, which it stuck to while the spare horses were round, and when they dispersed feeding, it slipped into the water and swam unconcerned about within a few feet of the writer.

24. *Phalacrocorax carbo*. Large Black Cormorant.—A few of these birds were seen near the large waterholes along the creeks.

25. *Pelecanus conspicillatus*. Pelican.—Several small lots of these fine birds were seen at different waters.

26. *Uroaetus audax*. Wedge-tailed Eagle.—This bird is without doubt becoming fewer in numbers as time goes on. Poison baits are, no doubt, responsible, and it is to be greatly regretted, for they play a great part in the balance of nature. The blow-fly pest shows this.

27. *Hieraetus pennatus*. Little Eagle.—Very few of these charming birds were seen. It may be that they are widely distributed this good season.

28. *Haliastur sphenurus*. Whistling Eagle.—A common bird, breeding in the large gums all along the creeks.

29. *Milvus migrans*. Allied Kite.—Plentiful along the creeks, where they were breeding.

30. *Falco hypoleucus*. Grey Falcon.—A few pairs were met with during the trip.

31. *Falco longipennis*. Little Falcon.—Quite a common bird, paying a good deal of attention to young Shell Parrots.

32. *Ieracidea berigora*. Brown Hawk.—A common bird, but not nearly so much so as I have seen it upon former trips. The bird's harsh note draws one's attention to it. Many nests were seen along the creeks.

33. *Cerchneis cenchroides*. Kestrel.—Very plentiful all through the country, nesting in the big grass along the creeks. One pair was mating in a discarded eagle's nest.

34. *Spiloglaux boobook*. Boobook Owl.—Often met with both in hollows and in the leafy branches of the gums along the creeks. They were often heard calling at night. This is a good sub-species, the coloration being very distinctive.

35. *Tyto alba*. Screech Owl.—These birds were often heard at night, and not having seen *T. novæ-hollandiæ* upon former expeditions, I believe *alba* to be the only species found there.

36. *Cacatua leadbeateri*. Pink Cockatoo.—A flock of these beautiful birds was seen at Crown Point, the only place they were observed.

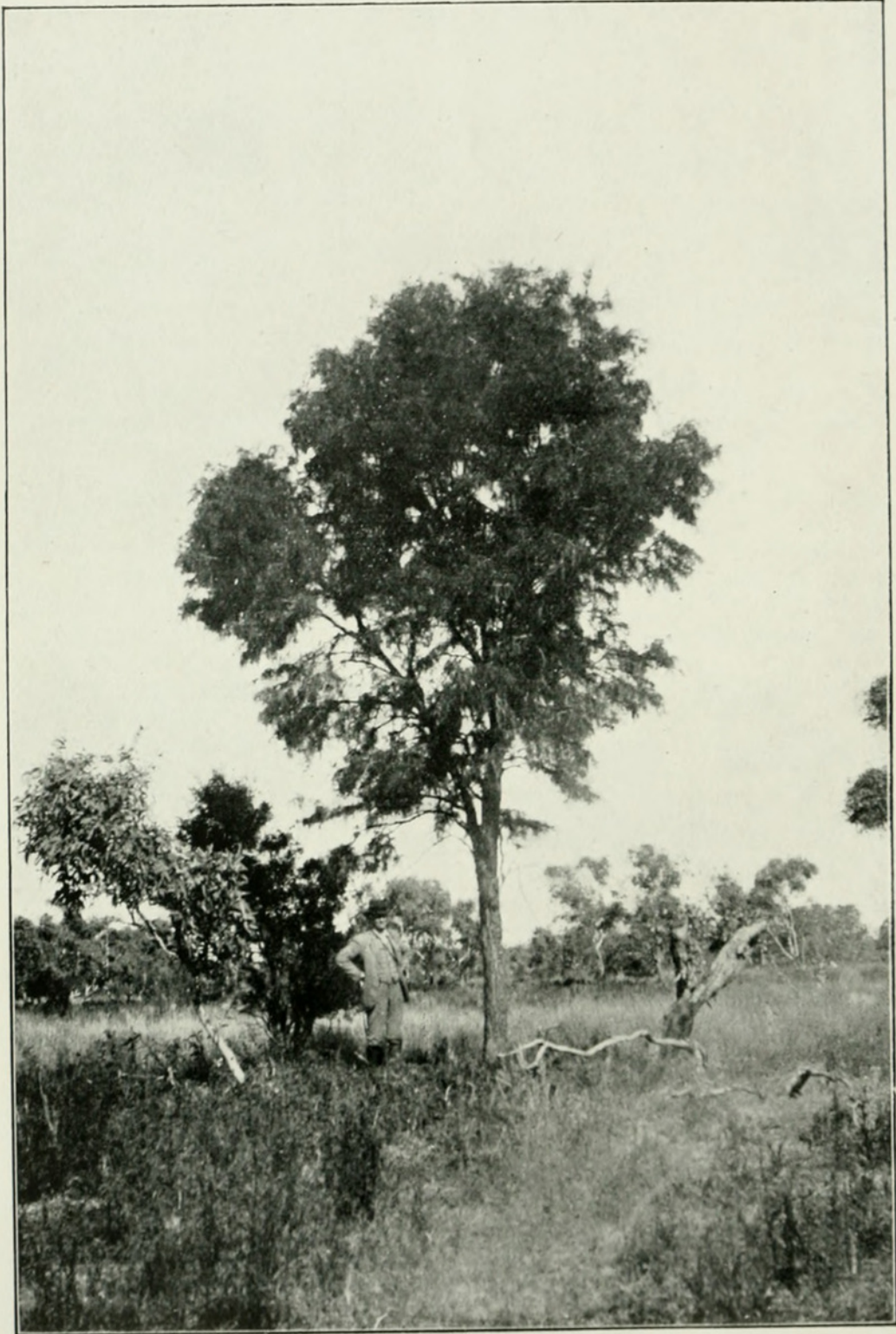
37. *Cacatua roseicapilla*. Rose-breasted Cockatoo.—These birds were numerous, and were seen in large parties feeding upon the ground; they had evidently nested earlier in the season.

38. *Barnardius zonarius myrtæ*. Mrs. Morgan's Parrot.—This is a very handsome bird, and the writer described it as new to science after his 1914 expedition. The bird is found in numbers all along the timbered creeks, and is very noisy; chattering away to one another so like the other members of the genus.

39. *Psephotus varius*. Many-coloured Parrot.—Often seen in the







Nesting site of the Red-breasted Babbler (*Pomatostomus rubcculus*),  
Central Australia.

Photo. by Capt. S. A. White, C.M.B.O.U.



mulga scrub, but not nearly so numerous as on former visits to this country. They feed a lot on the seed of the mulga (*Acacia anura*).

40. *Melopsittacus undulatus*. Warbling Grass Parrot.—These lovely little birds were often seen in large flocks both in South Australia and the Northern Territory.

41. *Podargus strigoides*. Tawny Frogmouth.—An odd bird or two seen in the mulga; not numerous.

42. *Halcyon pyrrhopygius*. Red-backed Kingfisher.—These birds were very numerous, and their quaint call could be heard in several places at the one time. It is the only Kingfisher found in this country.

43. *Merops ornatus*. Rainbow Bird.—This bird, so wrongly called the Bee-eater, was often seen along our route; its beautiful plumage and elegant flight attracted much attention.

44. *Cuculus pallidus*. Pallid Cuckoo.—These birds were very numerous all through the country; their strange, scale-like call was heard all day long, and they were often seen being mobbed by small birds. It was not uncommon to hear the birds call at night.

45. *Chalcites basalis*. Narrow-billed Bronze Cuckoo.—Only one specimen came under observation, but there is little doubt that the birds are widely distributed, but are silent at times.

46. *Hirundo neoxena*. Welcome Swallow.—Many birds were seen round stations.

47. *Lagenoplastes ariel*. Fairy Martin.—Found throughout the country; their strange retort-shaped nests were seen attached to the sides of cliffs and overhanging rocks.

48. *Petroica goodenovii*. Red-capped Robin.—This beautiful little bird is distributed all over the Central country, and is found along the watercourses as well as out in the sombre mulga scrubs. Often one would not be aware of its presence were it not for the flash of colour as the bird darts to the ground to pick up an insect.

49. *Melanodryas cucullata*. Hooded Robin.—These birds were not numerous; a pair or two were seen in the mulga scrub.

50. *Smicrornis brevirostris mathewsi*. Central Australian Tree-Tit.—The writer described this little bird after the 1914 expedition. It was found to be quite numerous all along the gum creeks.

51. *Oreoica gutturalis*. Bell Bird.—A common bird all through this country, and their wonderful ventriloquial note was often heard.

52. *Pachycephala rufiventris maudeae*. Central Australian Rufous-breasted Thickhead.—The writer described this bird as new to science after the 1914 expedition. It is a very consistent variety all through the centre of the continent. We did not find it numerous upon this visit.

53. *Leucocirca tricolor*. Black-and-White Fantail.—This wonderful little bird is found everywhere, and is as confident as in a country town.

54. *Pteropodocys maxima*. Ground Cuckoo-Shrike.—Very plentiful all along our route, and parties of ten or twelve could often be seen hopping about on the ground in search of grubs.

55. *Graucalus novæ-hollandiæ*. Black-faced Cuckoo-Shrike.—A fair number seen, but not nearly so numerous as the preceding species.

56. *Campephaga tricolor*. White-shouldered Caterpillar-eater.—These birds were numerous, and had nested but a short time before.

57. *Cinclosoma cinnamomeum*. Cinnamon Ground-Bird.—An occasional pair was seen, but they were not numerous.

58. *Pomatostomus superciliosus*. White-browed Babbler.—During the first part of the journey they were numerous, but after we got well into the Territory they were seldom seen.

59. *Pomatostomus rubeculus*. Red-breasted Babbler.—This bird



takes the place of the White-browed Babbler on the Finke, where large parties were at times seen moving along in "follow the leader" fashion, mobbing together and chattering in a wonderful way.

60. *Cincloramphus cruralis*. Brown Song Lark.—Very plentiful all through the country, and we flushed them from the herbage many times during the day to go soaring up aloft and singing their quaint refrain.

61. *Ptenoedus mathewsi*. Rufous Song-Lark.—The lovely song of this bird was often heard.

62. *Ephthianura tricolor*. Tricoloured Chat.—Very numerous in places, mostly in the open scrub country.

63. *Ephthianura aurifrons*. Orange-fronted Chat.—This bird was plentiful, but had not the range of the tricoloured bird. It was in large flocks.

64. *Ashbyia lovensis*. Desert-Chat.—Met with in many places on the stony tablelands, but not very numerous.

65. *Acanthiza uropygialis*. Chestnut-rumped Tit-Warbler.—A small party met with south of Charlotte Waters.

66. *Malurus leuconotus*. White-winged Wren.—Met with on the saltbush and cotton-bush country.

67. *Malurus assimilis*. Purple-backed Wren.—Around the Mound Springs at Dalhousie was the only locality where this bird was found.

68. *Artamus cinereus*. Black-faced Wood-Swallow.—Found all through the country from the start to the finish of the journey.

69. *Colluricincla rufiventris*. Buff-bellied Shrike-Thrush.—A fairly common bird along the watercourses.

70. *Grallina cyanoleuca*. Magpie-Lark.—Observed in many places near creeks, and some old mud nests were seen.

71. *Aphelocephala leucopsis whitei*. Central Australian White-face.—Numbers of these birds were seen along our route. They have a very much more consistent rufous coloration on upper surface and flanks in comparison with *A. leucopsis*.

72. *Dicaeum hirundinaceum*. Mistletoe Bird.—Several of these little birds were seen in the mistletoe (*Loranthus*) bushes.

73. *Pardalotus rubricatus*. Red-browed Pardalote.—Fairly plentiful, but always found in the red gums on the watercourses.

74. *Certhionyx variegatus*. Pied Honey-eater.—A few birds seen in the *Erimophila* bushes east of Blood's Creek.

75. *Meliphaga sonora*. Singing Honey-eater.—This bird is found all over the Central regions, and shows little variation in plumage.

76. *Myzantha flavigula*. Yellow-throated Miner.—A common bird all along the timbered creeks.

77. *Acanthagenys rufogularis*. Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater.—One of the most widely distributed birds of that country, and its strange gurgling note is often heard through the hottest hours of the day. It darts in and out amongst the flowering *Erimophila* bushes in a most erratic manner.

78. *Anthus australis*. Pipit.—Found all along our route on the tableland country as well as the creek flats, but they were not at all plentiful anywhere.

79. *Mirafrja javanica*. Bush-Lark.—One or two birds were flushed from the herbage while we were driving through it.

80. *Taeniopygia castanotis*. Chestnut-eared Finch.—A very numerous bird; some flocks seen must have contained thousands of birds.

81. *Corvus coronoides*. Australian Crow.—Plentiful all through the country.

82. *Cracticus nigrogularis*. Black-throated Butcher-Bird.—Plentiful all through the interior. This bird has a most charming song.

83. *Cracticus torquatus*. Collared Butcher-Bird.—Not a common bird; a few seen in the mulga scrub.





White, Samuel Albert. 1921. "A Central Australian Expedition." *The Emu : official organ of the Australasian Ornithologists' Union* 21(2), 84–94.  
<https://doi.org/10.1071/mu921084>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/35943>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1071/mu921084>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/380867>

**Holding Institution**

American Museum of Natural History Library

**Sponsored by**

Biodiversity Heritage Library

**Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: NOT\_IN\_COPYRIGHT

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.