

route from Moreton Bay to Port Essington, in the course of which, but more particularly between the head of the Gulf of Carpentaria and Port Essington, the sight and capture of the Emu was almost a daily occurrence ; so abundant in fact was it, that he states that he saw in the short space of eight miles at least a hundred, in flocks of three, five, ten, and even more, at a time. Dr. Leichhardt mentions that the natives on killing an Emu invariably break the wings—why, he was at a loss to conceive, as they could but slightly assist the animal in making its escape, should it survive ; some curious practices also exist with respect to this bird among the natives, the particulars of which I have not been able to learn, but I may mention that the young men and boys are not allowed to feed upon it.

The only vocal sound the Emu has been heard to utter is a low booming or pumping noise, which we know is produced in the female by means of the expansion and contraction of a large membranous bag, surrounding an oblong opening through the rings of the trachea ; but whether this peculiarity of structure is also to be found in the male I am not aware. For the loan of some interesting drawings and a specimen in spirits of this very singular conformation I am indebted to my friend W. Yarrell, Esq.

The eggs are six or seven in number, of a beautiful dark green, resembling shagreen in appearance ; five inches and three-quarters in length by three inches and three-quarters in breadth ; they are held in much esteem by the natives, who feed upon them exclusively whenever they can be procured. They are merely placed in a cavity scooped in the earth, generally in a sandy soil.

They pair with tolerable constancy, and the male bird appears to take a large share in the task of incubation. In captivity they speedily become tame and domesticated, and have been bred without difficulty in various collections in this country.

Little or no difference of colour is observable in the sexes, which may be thus described :—

The entire plumage is of a dull brown, mottled, particularly on the under surface, with dirty grey ; the feathers of the head and neck becoming gradually shorter, and so thinly placed that the purplish hue of the skin of the throat and round the ears is perfectly visible ; irides brown ; bill and legs dusky black.

The young on first quitting the shell have a very elegant appearance, the ground-colour being greyish white, with two longitudinal broad black stripes along the back, and two others on each side, each subdivided by a narrow middle line of white ; these stripes being continued along the neck without subdivision and broken into irregular spots on the head ; two other broken stripes pass down the fore-part of the neck and breast, and terminate in a broad band across the thighs.

The Plate represents a reduced figure of the adult and a brood of young ones.