it varies in size from two to four cart-loads, and is of a perfectly pyramidal form. The construction of the mound is not the work of one pair of birds, but is effected by the united labours of several; the same site appears to me, from the great size and the entire decomposition of the lower part, to be resorted to for several years in succession, the birds adding a fresh supply of materials on each occasion previous to laying.

The mode in which the materials composing these mounds are accumulated is equally singular,—the bird never using its bill, but always grasping a quantity in its foot, throwing it backwards to one common centre, and thus clearing the surface of the ground for a considerable distance so completely, that scarcely a leaf or a blade of grass is left. The heap being accumulated, and time allowed for a sufficient heat to be engendered, the eggs are deposited, not side by side, as is ordinarily the case, but planted at the distance of nine or twelve inches from each other, and buried at nearly an arm's depth, perfectly upright, with the large end upwards; they are covered up as they are laid, and allowed to remain until hatched. I have been credibly informed both by natives and settlers living near their haunts, that it is not an unusual event to obtain nearly a bushel of eggs at one time from a single heap; and as they are delicious eating, they are eagerly sought after. Some of the natives state that the females are constantly in the neighbourhood of the heap about the time the young are likely to be hatched, and frequently uncover and cover them up again, apparently for the purpose of assisting those that may have appeared; while others have informed me that the eggs are merely deposited, and the young allowed to force their way unassisted. In all probability, as Nature has adopted this mode of reproduction, she has also furnished the tender birds with the power of sustaining themselves from the earliest period; and the great size of the egg would equally lead to this conclusion, since in so large a space it is reasonable to suppose that the bird would be much more developed than is usually found in eggs of smaller dimensions. In further confirmation of this point, I may add, that in searching for eggs in one of the mounds I discovered the remains of a young bird, apparently just excluded from the shell, and which was clothed with feathers, not with down, as is usually the case: it is to be hoped that those who are resident in Australia, in situations favourable for investigating the subject, will direct their attention to the further elucidation of these interesting points. The upright position of the eggs tends to strengthen the opinion that they are never disturbed after being deposited, as it is well known that the eggs of birds which are placed horizontally, are frequently turned during incubation. Although, unfortunately, I was almost too late for the breeding season, I nevertheless saw several of the heaps, both in the interior and at Illawarra; in every instance they were placed in the most retired and shady glens, and on the slope of a hill, the part above the nest being scratched clean, while all below remained untouched, as if the birds had found it more easy to convey the materials down than to throw them up. In one instance only was I fortunate enough to find a perfect egg, although the shells of many from which the young had been excluded were placed in the manner I have described. At Illawarra they were rather deposited in the light vegetable mould than among the leaves which formed a considerable heap above them. The eggs are perfectly white, of a long oval form, three inches and three-quarters long by two inches and a half in diameter: a fine egg of this bird was subsequently presented to me by J. H. Plunkett, Esq., Attorney-General, New South Wales.

While stalking about the wood they frequently utter a rather loud clucking noise; and in various parts of the brush I observed depressions in the earth, which the natives informed me were made by the birds in dusting themselves.

The stomach is extremely muscular, and the crop of one dissected was filled with seeds, berries, and a few insects.

I have already alluded to its capability for domestication; and I have the gratification of adding, that a living specimen was in the possession of Mr. Alexander MacLeay for several years, during which it was mostly at large, and usually associated with the fowls in the poultry-yard. On my arrival at Sydney this venerable gentleman took me into his garden and showed me the bird, which, as if in its native woods, had for two successive years collected an immense mass of materials similar to those above described. The borders, lawn and shrubbery over which it was allowed to range presented an appearance as if regularly swept, from the bird having scratched to one common centre everything that lay upon the surface; the mound in this case was about three feet and a half high, and ten feet over. On placing my arm in it I found the heat to be about 90° or 95° Fahr. The bird itself was strutting about with a proud and majestic air, sometimes parading round the heap, at others perching on the top, and displaying its brilliantly coloured neck and wattle to the greatest advantage; this wattle it has the power of expanding and contracting at will; at one moment it is scarcely visible, while at another it is extremely prominent.

Before I left New South Wales Mr. MacLeay's bird had met with an untimely end by falling into a tank or water-butt, occasioned, it was conjectured, by seeing the reflection of its own image in the water, and rushing forward to meet a supposed antagonist. On dissection this individual was found to be a male, thereby proving that the sexes are equally employed in forming the mound for the reception of the eggs.

After all the facts that have been stated, I trust it will be evident that its natural situation is among the *Rasores*, and that it forms one of a great family of birds peculiar to Australia and the Indian islands, of which *Megapodius* forms a part; and in confirmation of this view I may add, that the sternum has the two deep emarginations so truly characteristic of the *Gallinaceæ*; at all events, it is in no way allied to the *Vulturidæ*, and is nearly as far removed from *Menura*.

The adults have the whole of the upper surface, wings and tail blackish brown; the feathers of the under surface blackish brown at the base, becoming silvery grey at the tip; skin of the head and neck deep pink red, thinly sprinkled with short hair-like blackish brown feathers; wattle bright yellow, tinged with red where it unites with the red of the neck; bill black; irides and feet brown.

The female, which is about a fourth less than the male in size, is so closely the same in colour as to render a separate description unnecessary. She also possesses the wattle, but not to so great an extent.

The figure is about two-thirds the size of life.