

person among the bushes, when the attention of the bird being arrested by the apparent intrusion of another of its own sex, it will be attracted within the range of the gun: if the bird be hidden from view by the surrounding objects, any unusual sound, as a shrill whistle, will generally induce him to show himself for an instant, by causing him to leap with a gay and sprightly air upon some neighbouring branch to ascertain the cause of the disturbance: advantage must be taken of this circumstance immediately, or the next moment it may be half-way down the gully. So totally different is the shooting of this bird to anything practised in Europe, that the most expert shot would have but little chance until well experienced in the peculiar nature of the country and the habits of the bird. The *Memura* seldom, if ever, attempts to escape by flight, but easily eludes pursuit by its extraordinary power of running. None are so efficient in obtaining specimens as the naked black, whose noiseless and gliding steps enable him to steal upon it unheard and unperceived, and with a gun in his hand he rarely allows it to escape, and in many instances he will even kill it with his own weapons.

The Lyre-bird is of a wandering disposition, and although it probably keeps to the same brush; it is constantly engaged in traversing it from one end to the other, from mountain-top to the bottom of the gullies, whose steep and rugged sides present no obstacle to its long legs and powerful muscular thighs; it is also capable of performing extraordinary leaps; and I have heard it stated that it will spring ten feet perpendicularly from the ground. It appears to be of solitary habits, as I have never seen more than a pair together, and these only in a single instance; they were both males, and were chasing each other round and round with extreme rapidity, apparently in play, pausing every now and then to utter their loud shrill calls: while thus employed they carried the tail horizontally, as they always do when running quickly through the bush, that being the only position in which this great organ could be conveniently borne at such times. Among its many curious habits, the only one at all approaching to those of the *Gallinacea* is that of forming small round hillocks, which are constantly visited during the day, and upon which the male is continually trampling, at the same time erecting and spreading out its tail in the most graceful manner and uttering his various cries, sometimes pouring forth his natural notes, at others mocking those of other birds, and even the howling of the native dog or Dingo. The early morning and the evening are the periods when it is most animated and active.

It may truly be said that all the beauty of this bird lies in the plumage of his tail, the new feathers of which appear in February or March, but do not attain their full beauty and perfection until June; during this and the four succeeding months it is in its finest state; after this the feathers are gradually shed, to be resumed again at the period above-stated. I am led to believe that they are all assumed simultaneously, by the fact of a native having brought to my camp a specimen with a tail not more than six inches long, the feathers of which were in embryo, and all of the same length. Upon reference to my journal I find the following notes upon the subject:—"Mar. 14, Liverpool range. Several *Memuras* killed today: their tails not so fine as they will be." "Oct. 25.—I find this bird is now losing its tail-feathers; and, judging from appearances, they will be all shed in a fortnight."

Although upon one occasion I forced this bird to take wing, it was merely for the purpose of descending a gully, and I am led to believe that it seldom exerts this power unless under similar circumstances. It is particularly partial to traversing the trunks of fallen trees, and frequently attains a considerable altitude by leaping from branch to branch. Independently of its loud full call, which may be heard reverberating over the gullies to the distance of at least a quarter of a mile, it possesses an inward and varied song, the lower notes of which can only be heard when you have successfully approached to within a few yards of the bird during the time it is singing. This animated strain is frequently discontinued abruptly, and again commenced with a low, inward, snapping noise, ending with an imitation of the loud and full note of the Satin Bird, and always accompanied with a tremulous motion of the tail.

The food of the *Memura* appears to consist principally of insects, particularly centipedes and coleoptera; I also found the remains of shelled snails in the gizzard, which is very strong and muscular.

I regret that circumstances did not admit of my acquiring a perfect knowledge of the nidification of this very singular bird; I never found the nest but once, and this unfortunately was after the breeding-season was over; but all those of whom I made inquiries respecting it, agreed in assuring me that it is either placed on the ledge of a projecting rock, at the base of a tree, or on the top of a stump, but always near the ground; and a cedar cutter whom I met in the brushes informed me that he had once found a nest, which, to use his own expression, was "built like that of a magpie," adding that it contained but one egg, and that upon his visiting the nest again some time afterwards he found in it a newly-hatched young, which was helpless and destitute of the power of vision. The natives state that the eggs are two in number, of a light colour, freckled with spots of red. The nest seen by myself, and to which my attention was drawn by my black companion Natty, was placed on the prominent point of a rock, in a situation quite secluded from observation behind, but affording the bird a commanding view and easy retreat in front; it was deep and shaped like a basin, and had the appearance of having been roofed; was of a large size, formed outwardly of sticks, and lined with the inner bark of trees and fibrous roots.

General plumage brown; the secondary wing-feathers nearest the body, and the outer webs of the remainder rich rufous brown; upper tail-coverts tinged with rufous; chin and front of the throat rufous, much richer during the breeding-season; all the under surface brownish ash-colour, becoming paler on the vent; upper surface of the tail blackish brown; under surface silvery grey, becoming very dark on the external web of the outer feather; the inner webs of these feathers fine rufous, crossed by numerous bands, which at first appear of a darker tint, but on close inspection prove to be perfectly transparent; the margin of the inner web and tips black; bill and nostrils black; irides blackish brown; bare space round the eye blackish lead-colour; legs and feet black, the scales mealy.

The female differs in wanting the singularly formed tail, and in having the bare space round the eye less extensive and less brilliantly coloured.

The Plate represents the two sexes, about half the natural size