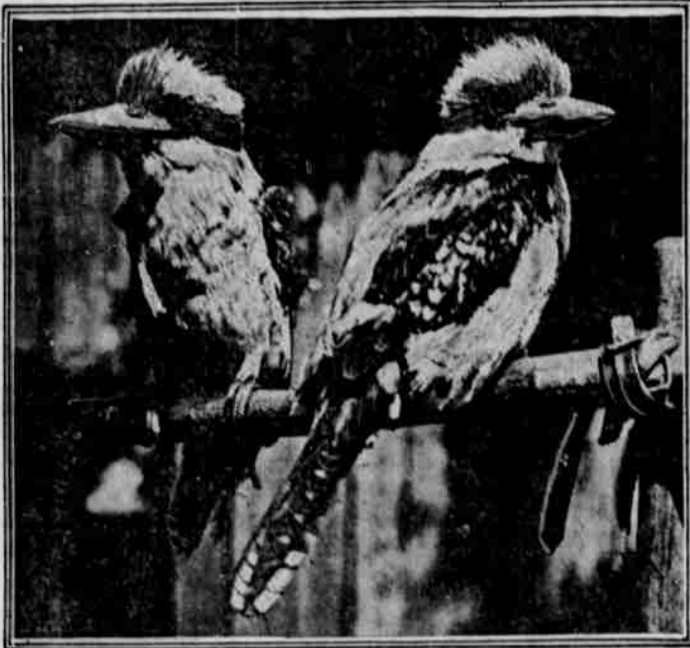


ODD THINGS IN AUSTRALIA



"Laughing Jackasses" of Australia.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

AUSTRALIA, possessor of so many features unfamiliar to the rest of the world, might be catalogued by a nature lover by her trees and her birds. One readily understands why the Australian loves his trees. The groves of giant eucalyptus form pictures never forgotten, and the scent of the wattle brings a homesick feeling like the smell of the sage to a Westerner.

The flora is not only beautiful, it is unique, without counterpart in other lands. Of the 10,000 species of plants most of them are purely Australian, and are unknown even in New Zealand. The general impression one gets of Australian forests is their total unlikeness to anything seen elsewhere. The great forests of timber trees are not damp and shaded and all of one species, but are well lighted and filled with other forests of shorter trees; in places the woods consist of large widely spaced trees surrounded only by bunch grass, and even in areas where water is not to be found on the surface for hundreds of square miles true forests of low trees are present.

Forms which may be recognized as tulip, lily, honeysuckle and fern take on a surprising aspect. They are not garden flowers, but trees, and the landscape of which they form a part reminds one of the hypothetical representations in books of science of a landscape of Mesozoic time, a period antedating our own by millions of years.

The trees are indeed those of a bygone age. In America and Europe shadowy forms of fossil leaves of strange plant species are gathered from the rock and studied with interest; in Australia many of these ancient trees are living. The impression that one is looking at a landscape which has forever disappeared from other parts of the world is so vivid that the elms and maples and oaks in some of the city streets strike a jarring note. The transition from Jurassic to modern times is painfully abrupt.

With a flora of such great interest, it occasions no surprise to find that Australia is the home of many eminent botanists, and that geologic history is a common subject of study in schools.

Eucalyptus the National Tree.

Australia is the home of the wonderful eucalyptus, a tree about which a fair-sized library of books and pamphlets has been written, without exhausting the subject. For geological ages the eucalyptus have remained undisturbed in this "biological backwater," and, spreading over the continent, have adapted themselves to many varieties of soil and climate and elevation. About 300 species have already been discovered in the small part of the continent explored by botanists.

The eucalypts include some of the tallest trees in the world. The Victorian forests department records trees which measure 329, 333 and 342 feet, and states that there are "scores of trees about 300 feet in height." The surveyor of the Dandenong ranges made notes of the tallest trees felled during an eight-year period and reports that "all those measured were over 300 feet in length."

Eucalyptus trees reproduce themselves readily and grow about seven times more rapidly than oak or hickory. From a ton of bark of the ginkgo tree was obtained by analysis 410 pounds of tannic extract and 308 pounds of oxalic acid. From the gum and leaves of these trees come also

the highly valuable eucalyptus oils, from which no less than twenty-seven constituents have been distilled for pharmaceutical purposes and for the separation of metals by the flotation process.

The eucalyptus is the great timber tree of the continent. Of sixty varieties in Victoria, twenty have high commercial value and are finding an ever-increasing market. The Tasmanian blue gum is one of the strongest, densest, and most durable woods in the world. Timbers 2 feet square, exceeding 100 feet in length, are readily obtained, and, when used for piling, need not be weighted, for the density of the wood is such that it sinks in water. Their strength is twice that of English oak, and they are practically immune from attack by the teredo, which plays such havoc with ordinary timbers.

The Jurrub, a eucalyptus of west Australia, is another famous tree. It is one of the few woods of the world which successfully resist the ravages of white ants; it is practically immune from the attacks of marine borers, and, like the iron-bark of Victoria and New South Wales, has been known to withstand fire better than iron girders.

Many Beautiful Birds.

Australia is stocked with beautiful birds, many of them of unusual aspect. The man who originated the popular saying that "Australian birds have plumage, but no song," must have lived in a sound-proof box. Among the 775 species are included some of the most brilliantly colored, sweetest voiced and most unusual birds in the world.

Along the northeast coast is the bower bird, which adorns its nest and decorates its playing ground with shells, seeds, and other bright objects, not despising brass buttons and cartridge cases.

The lyre bird, famous for its plumage, is the rival of the mockingbird of the South in sweetness of tone and skill as a mimic. The crow-shrike ("magpies"), the brown flycatcher ("jacky winter"), the bush warbler, the rock warbler, the reed warbler, the bush lark, the cuckoo, the honey eaters, and the "willywagtail," constitute parts of a bird chorus difficult to surpass. Cockatoos are as common in Australia as crows in the Central West; even in the desert flocks are frequently seen. Some of them are excellent talkers, most of them gorgeously dressed.

A most surprising bird is the kookaburra, or laughing jackass. All at once in the quiet bush come loud peals of uproarious, mocking laughter. One is not inclined to join in the merriment—it all seems as foolish and weird as if an idiot boy were disturbing a congregation in church. When the source of the laughter is located it turns out to be a silly-looking bird with clumsy, square body and open mouth, sitting unconcernedly on a stump.

The ibis occurs by thousands, and the gigantic black-necked stork, or jabiru, standing 5 feet high, inhabits the swamps of the northern coast, while the graceful black swan frequents the estuaries and lakes. The mallard hen and the brush turkey build mounds of sticks, leaves, and earth 3 to 10 feet high.

The cassowary of the forests of Queensland and Papua and the emu, which is found throughout the continent, are unknown outside the Australian region. The emu is the national bird and shares with the kangaroo the task of upholding the shield on the commonwealth coat of arms. It is a powerful bird and can run at the rate of 15 to 20 miles an hour.

FOR THE BRIDE

A most beautiful gown for the modern bride is of the conventional white satin, untrimmed except for a tiny yoke of real lace, with a skirt that is short in front and very long in back.

Silk Pique

French blue silk pique fashions a most smartly tailored tuck-in blouse for a black kasha suit that has fringed hem, fringed coat bottom and fringed snash.

LIZARD-SKIN HOSE

New Hile sports hosiery have a hand-blocked lizard skin design in tones of tan and soft grays and browns. One wears them to match gray and tan lizard shoes.

Suits of Pique

For girls nothing could be more attractive than a suit of pique in delicate pink or blue. The coats are quite long and simple and the waists are made of figured dimity.

Scraps of Humor



SUBTLETY

An Oxford undergraduate, a son of the vicarage, discovered he was uncomfortably short of money, so he spent some time concocting a letter that would have the right effect upon a somewhat severe parent. When finally completed, the letter read as follows: "My dear father, I wonder if you will oblige me very greatly by sending me a copy of this month's parish magazine, and a five-pound note? P. S.—Don't forget the parish magazine."

Ancient

Bride—Boo, hoo! Walter doesn't like my cooking.
Her Mother—How do you know? Does he say so?
Bride—He didn't come right out and say so, but he told me he liked fruit cake to be at least six months old—and we've only been married five weeks!

WHAT FLAVOR?



"I shor got in a jam yestiddy, Jimmy."
"What kinda jam, Bill?"
"Think it was strawberry."

Not Responsible

Husband (anxiously)—My wife seems not to have the slightest interest in life.
Doctor—What makes you think that?
"Well, I've tried her with golf, billiards, football and racing, and it's just like talking to a stone!"

Wonderful

"You know Boothby—great fellow for detail."
"He is, that! He's the sort of chap who would go and get married and be able afterward to tell you whether it was Mendelssohn, Lohengrin or Tannhauser they played during the ceremony."

THE BEST



Slim Kid—Whot d'you like best about school?
Fat Kid—Goin' home from it.

Business View

"You seem to have a good deal of faith in doctors," said Barratt to his invalid friend.
"I have," was the reply. "A doctor would be foolish to let a good customer like me die."

Tolerance

Housewife—I should think you would be ashamed to beg in this neighborhood.
Tramp—Don't apologize for it, ma'am; I've seen worse.—Montreal Star.

Easily Named

Very Friendly Visitor—Did you have any difficulty in choosing a name for baby?
Fond Mother—Not the slightest. You see, dear, we've only one rich relative.

What Does It Matter?

"Did you really understand the learned lecture you heard last night?"
"No, but that didn't matter, I had a free ticket." — Gemütliche Saetose (Leipzig).

All Did It

Magistrate—It seems strange to me that you could keep on robbing that enormous corporation for so long without being caught.
The Prisoner (brightly)—Well, the corporation was pretty busy itself.

Making Them Work

"Score one for the husbands."
"What now?"
"Some of them are finding their hitherto frivolous wives make very fair chauffeurs."

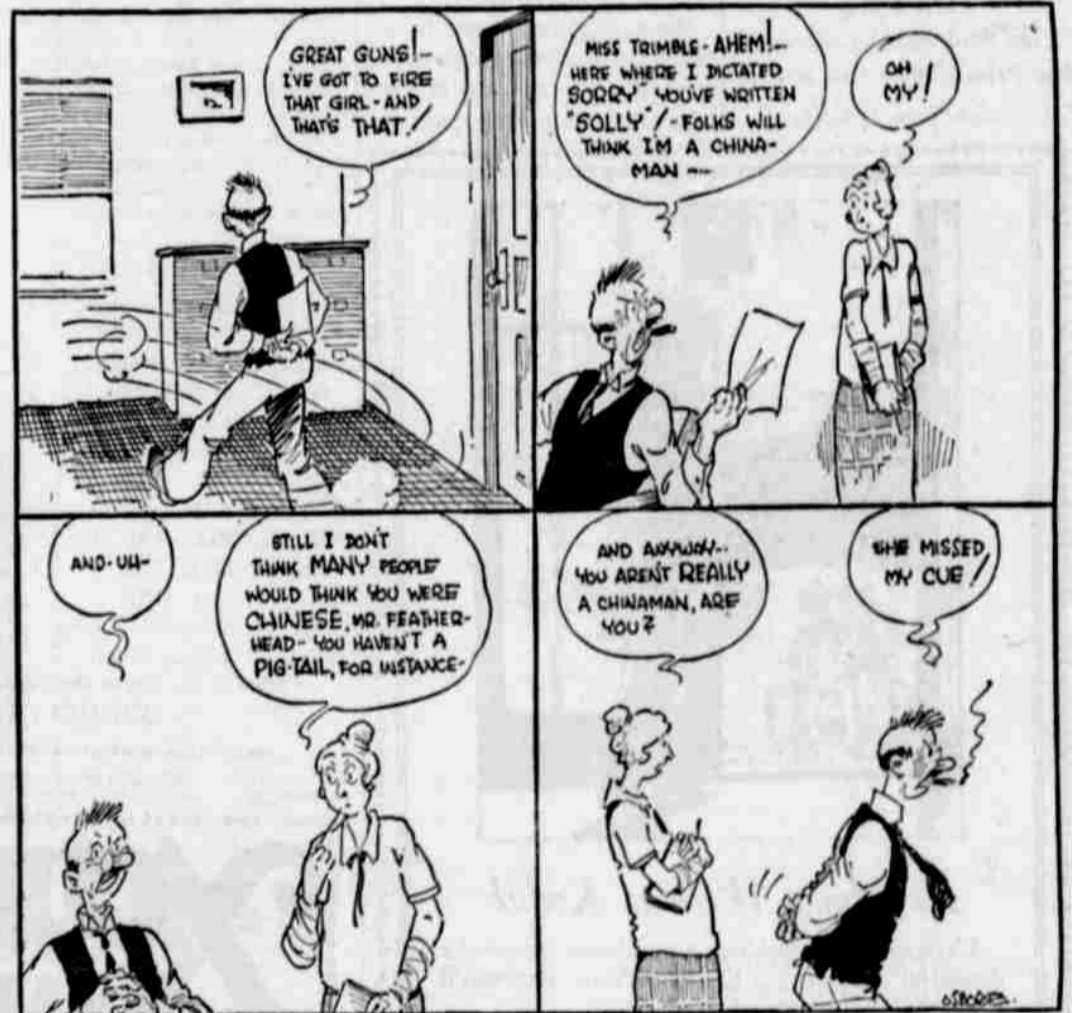
OUR COMIC SECTION

Our Pet Peeve



THE FEATHERHEADS

You Know the Kind



FINNEY OF THE FORCE

Retrospect

