

They make their nests in all sorts of places in the bush, but they prefer to get under cover of some sort. Hollows at the roots of trees or under clumps of bush flax are favourite places. If they had only the sense to keep quiet they would be much harder to find, but they are always scolding or calling about something, and if we only stand still for a moment we are sure to hear a chorus from a lot of sillies giving themselves away under some logs or scrub.

Though they seem such fools ashore, they must be wise enough at sea, for they go away from here on a six months' voyage, steering their way over the ocean, to return at the appointed time. Perhaps they go to the Auckland Islands or the Antarctic Ocean, for they have ample powers in those little flippers with the lightning speed.

For sport they can go through the water with speed like a porpoise, perhaps ten or twenty miles an hour, and, as if not satisfied with this, they come to the surface and take long flying leaps time after time, staying in the air nearly as long as they do in the water, so that it would take a very lively fish to catch one—and I think nothing could do it but a grampus. The tail is so arranged with strong little feathers that it can be used sideways as a rudder, for which the legs may assist, but I do not think the latter are used for swimming. Though the feet are webbed they are narrow and clumsy, with cushions beneath well adapted for climbing about on the rocks, but not at all for swimming, because the knee-joint, so free in other swimmers, is useless to the penguin.

MOULTING.

After the young ones are grown up and gone away some of the old penguins remain for their moulting through January and February; but they are not particular about the date to a month or so. During this time they seem to be in misery and out of humour, as if moulting was a very disagreeable business. Only about 10 per cent. of them remain, which implies that they only moult every eight or ten years. They generally stay in the bush in dens under the roots of trees, where the young were reared. One of them often comes down to the water's edge; but, instead of holding up its head, proud of a pretty yellow crest and snow-white satin breast, it looks down at its pinfeather coat in a dejected sort of way, as much as to say, "Here is a pretty state of affairs; cannot go into the water, and have had no dinner for a fortnight."

It is no wonder that they are cross, as their voices plainly indicate, no matter what the words may be. It is something like the voice of guinea-fowl, but a very different tune, with a lot of snarl and complaint in it; and sometimes I think that there is a distinct call in it, as if they said, "Come on, come on; I am starving for that fish." While the one shouting out in the water seems to say, "Where are you?" But I notice it never gets an answer except by accident—as if it was always the wrong one that was within hearing. This made me think that their mates fed the moulters, as they do the hatchers; but I could never catch one at it, they are so sly.

Though they sit outside most of their time, they hop into their dens when they hear you coming through the scrub, and I have watched one of these callers for hours and nobody ever came near it; and by other indications at the den I think they get no food until their new feathers are well set. The shout of the one out in the water is just as if he had hurt himself. It is something between a scream and a roar; and when another one or two say the same thing, in slightly different voices, the concert is not at all unlike the hee-haw of a donkey. In fact, there is a variety that the sailors call the "jackass penguin," because it reminds them of a donkey singing. This is a great come-down for a bird as a singer.

They are more like ghouls than birds, for though there are plenty of nice dry dens for them to occupy, they seem to pick out the sloppiest they can find, and there they sit about in the mud as if they were comfortable; but I suppose their dense coats make them indifferent about wet—they may not understand it at all as I do. At breeding-time, if their rookery is to windward, you do not need a dog to scent it out in the bush, for you can do it yourself quite easily. It is always near fresh water, of which they must drink large quantities, because I often see them drinking; and I suppose that when they are using up their great coats of fat all they want is water. I was going into a cave one day for eggs, and there was a fellow at the door catching a little spout of falling water from the cliff. He had his great mouth spread out under it as if he was afraid of wasting a drop, and he stayed so long at it that I had not patience to wait for him to finish his drink. You would never think he had such a mouth unless you saw him showing it off in that way. Probably he had just come ashore, and was making up for lost time when he could not get it at sea, though he ought to have been able to catch some that way from a passing shower.

It is just possible that each rookery is a separate hapu of its own, because there is one near Luncheon Cove where they are all of a slightly different plumage, so that they must be very exclusive, because there are several rookeries of the ordinary kind within half a mile of them. There is another in "South Cove," at Pigeon Island, that comes about a fortnight earlier than any of the others that I know of, so that they look like an old-established separate community; and we need not wonder, for such often exists even among men.

I have not seen them fighting often, but when they do it is something awful for severity and endurance, for there will be a yard of foam around them for fully half an hour, and blood running so freely that I can see it red on their feathers, though washed off every moment with the splashing; so that it is a very serious business. They should take a lesson from the Maori-hens and fight oftener, have more fun, and do less damage.

As they only use their legs for steering, they keep their breasts very low when on the surface, to have their fin-like wings under water, and then they are the most ungraceful-looking birds that swim—something like a Muscovy duck getting drowned. But it would be hard to drown a penguin, for I took one down one day and threw it in the sea, and though it was quite calm I never saw it again. I might as well have thrown in a stone. It must have gone round the point or out of sight before it came up; and when I let one go in shallow water it darts about in a zigzag course—the best for defeating some swift enemy—till it gets into deep water.