

erage, placed in an ordinary sitting-room, or a dealer's shop. It is perfectly hardy, and may be safely wintered out of doors, provided a place of shelter may be prepared for it, to which it can retire, when it pleases, from rain and cold. The length of this bird is about seven inches, of which the tail measures three-and-a-half. The general colour of the plumage is grass green, which harmonises so exactly with the surrounding vegetation that it can with difficulty be detected by the observer, whether the bird be reposing in the shade, among the boughs of the gum trees or busily engaged in feeding upon the seeds of the grass that forms its usual diet. The head of the adult Budgerigar is of a primrose color; the neck, shoulder and wing-coverts are yellowish-green, each feather being edged with a creir-scented border of grey, which gives to that part of the plumage a scalloped or undulated appearance, whence the bird derives the names by which it is known among English dealers, of shell parrot, Zebra and Undulated Parakeet. Some authorities derive the name from the flight, which is undulating. The flight feathers of the wings are dark grey, edged with green, and have each a yellowish-green patch in the centre; the two middle tail feathers, which are much longer than the rest, are bright blue; the remaining feathers of the tail are yellow, with green tips, while the back and tail coverts are vividly green, as are also the breast and vent. The quill portion of the tail feathers is black; the beak is white, the legs are gray, or rather light-slate colour. The chin is yellow, ornamented with four small spots of bright blue, of which colour, a small band extends down the side of the beak on each side, giving the appearance of wearing a moustache. The scalloped or undulated markings are continued all over the head in young birds, before their first moult; and strange to say, in extreme age, the plumage reverts to this youth-

ful type; so that old and worn out specimens may be mistaken by the unwary for nestlings. Of late years, a breed of yellow Budgerigars has been produced; a pair of this colour, in which the characteristic undulations were very faint, were exhibited some years ago at the Alexandra Palace Bird Show, and were sold at £6—10s.

A blue variety, it is stated, has been also seen more than once; and there is little doubt that, in a few years time there will be as many kinds of Budgerigars as there are now of canaries. The male Budgerigar may be readily distinguished from its mate by the blue shade of the cere surrounding the nostrils, which is buff or brown in the female, and forms a differentiating mark that can scarcely be overlooked by even the most inexperienced amateur. The story of unprincipled dealers making a practice of destroying the blue colour of the cere with caustic, and then palming the birds off on their customers as females, is unworthy of credit, and is, I believe, really devoid of foundation in fact, but to obviate the possibility of becoming the victim of a paltry fraud, the intending purchaser will do well to make choice of a respectable dealer, in a large way of business. Such a man has a reputation to sustain, and would not find it pay to have recourse to petty trickery. The customer will either get what he wants, or be plainly told that it is not then in stock.

Habitation.—The Budgerigar, as this pretty bird is called by the aborigines of its native land, is indigenous to South Australia, whence it retires northwards at the close of the breeding season, which usually commences in December, and ends in July or August; two, sometimes three broods being produced during that time. These birds are eminently gregarious—as many pairs will live peaceably together as the size of the room or aviary in which they are kept will admit—The only precaution necessary being the

supply of a sufficient quantity of nesting accommodation, without which there will be incessant quarrels for favourite sites, and small hopes of successful breeding. It is better not to associate the Budgerigar with any other species, especially the Astrilds or tiny ornamental finches, as these impudent little creatures are in the habit of filling all and sundry nest-boxes, whether intended for their own use or that of their companions in captivity, with grass, feathers and rubbish of every description, to the utter discomfort of the poor Budgerigars.

Breeding.—In their native fields the undulated Grass Parakeets breed in the hollow branches (spouts) of the gum trees, making no nest beyond smoothing the cavity they have fixed upon for their nesting place. In the aviary they are not at all particular, and will avail themselves of any little box, rotten log of wood, hole in the wall, or cocoa-nut husk, that their owner may place at their disposal, in which to lay their eggs and bring up their families. As a nest for the Budgerigar I very much prefer a cocoa-nut husk, and I think most of my birds are of the same opinion; It should have a small hole at one end, and be supplied with a perch beside the hole, where the male can sit and sing, while his mate is engaged with her important duties inside.

(To be Continued.)

WISDOM OF THE WOODPECKER.

In California the woodpecker stores acorns away, although he never eats them. He bores several holes, differing slightly in size, at the fall of the year, invariably in a pine tree. Then he finds an acorn, which he adjusts to one of the holes prepared for its reception. But he does not eat the acorn; for, as a rule, he is not a vegetarian. His object in storing away the acorns exhibits foresight and knowledge of results more akin to reason than to