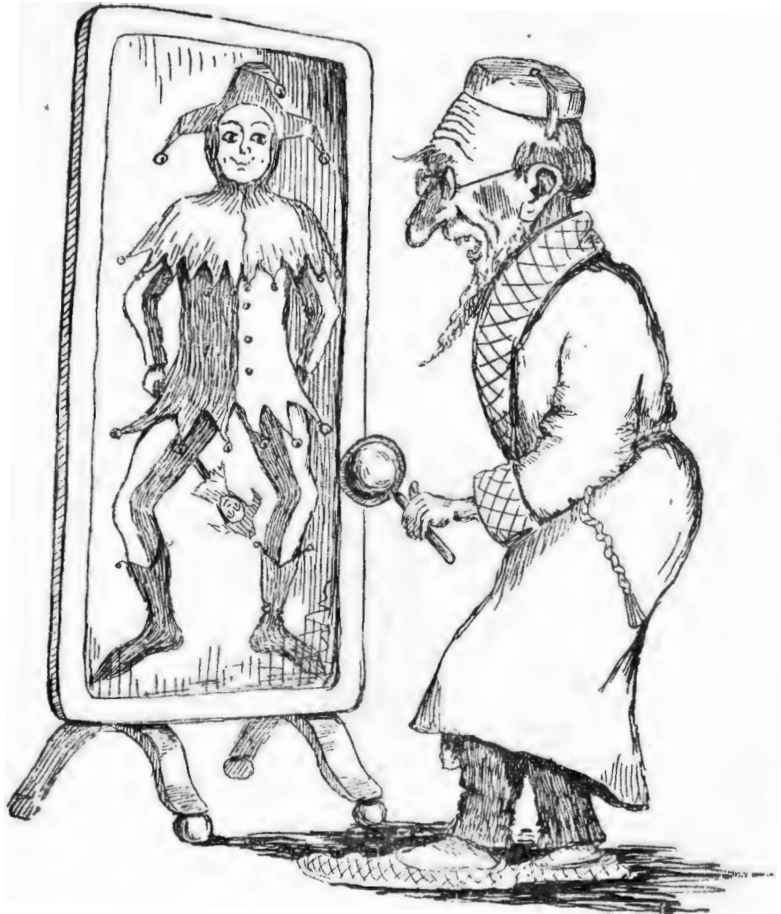


TAILS AND TARRADIDDLES

AN AUSTRALIAN
BOOK OF BIRDS AND BEASTS

By THE PERFESSER
and ALTER EGO, Esquire



The Perfesser thinks it is a very good likeness of Alter Ego, Esq., and Alter Ego, Esq. thinks it is a very good likeness of the Perfesser, but neither of them thinks it is a good likeness of himself. People are like that about likenesses.



AUSTRALIA:
CORNSTALK PUBLISHING COMPANY
ARNOLD PLACE, SYDNEY
1925

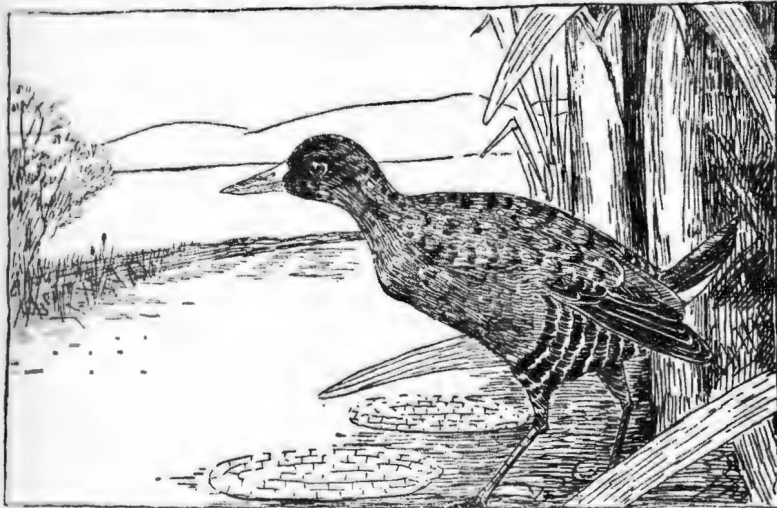
EXPLANATION

Some people prefer to wait for explanations until the end, but by then you have usually forgotten what they want to explain, so that is not of much use. It is much better to explain at the beginning, so that, when you come to anything, you know what the explanation is.

This book has two authors. One is the Perfesser, a really-truly Perfesser, with carpet slippers and a long dressing-gown, who is very wise. The other is Alter Ego, Esq., who is not so wise. The Perfesser is very polite. He always knocks at doors, and waits until he is asked to come in. He even knocks at the door of his own room—which is sometimes awkward; for, if there is no one inside to ask him in, he has to stay outside all night. It is because he is so polite that he has allowed Alter Ego, Esq., to write some of this book. All the very wise verses have been written by the Perfesser, and in these the natural history is perfectly correct. But if you come across any that are not wise, you will know that these have been written by Alter Ego, Esq., and he has forgotten all the natural history he ever knew. This would not matter so very much, only he will make it up out of his head. The pictures have also been done by Alter Ego, Esq., not because he can make pictures, but because the Perfesser was too polite to tell him not to.

The title of the book was made up by Alter Ego, Esq. The Perfesser wanted to call it "Beneath the Eucalyptus," but Alter Ego, Esq., said that was a silly name, because no one would know whether it meant *Eucalyptus siderophloia* or *Eucalyptus corymbosa*; while, if it were called "Tails and Tarradiddles" every one would know exactly what was meant.





THE CRAKES

Do you know the Crakes that creep in the creek?
Or does nobody know them but me?
They're just like the great big Water-hens,
But tiny as tiny can be.

There's the Spotted Crake, and the Spotless Crake,
And the Little Crake—that's three;
But you've got to keep—Oo—ever so still,
If a Crake you want to see.

They creep in and out of the reeds and grass;
They're as shy as ever can be;
You must lie quite still, and hold your breath,
If a Crake you want to see.

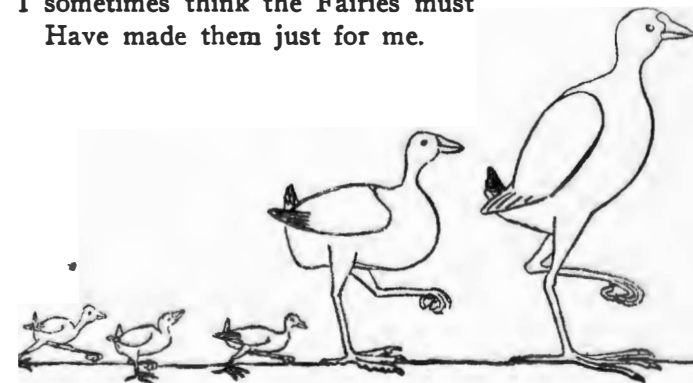
And then they will all come creeping out,
One—and two—and three;
They will point their toes and flick their tails,
As grown-up as can be.

The Coot and the Redbill are great big birds,
And they're quite easy to see;
Still, the Crakes are grown-up too, you know,
Although they are tiny-wee.

They are not black, and they are not blue,
But brown as ever can be;
And I suppose they're brown because
It makes them hard to see.

They're the loveliest darlings in all the creek,
Because they are so wee,
And because they creep, and sneak, and hide,
And because they're hard to see.

Don't you know the Crakes that creep in the creek?
O, why can't you ever see?
I sometimes think the Fairies must
Have made them just for me.





PLATYPUS

Platypus, Platypus, tell me as you float,
Why you have a duck's face with a furry coat;
Didn't you know really what you were going to be?
Now, don't look offended—you can surely tell me.

Platypus, Platypus, take me for a dive.
I only want to see how it is you keep alive.
What I want to know is, the dinner that you seek,
And how you ever catch it with your funny old beak.

Platypus, Platypus, show me where you hide
Your two furry babies in the creek-side;
Take me to their cradle, I shan't do them harm;
I only want to see you have them tucked up warm.

MR. BANDICOOT

Snuffle and snort,
Snuffle and snort,
Mr. Bandicoot!
Is it a worm you are after;
Is it a grub or a root?

Snuffle and snort,
Snuffle and snort,
Mr. Bandicoot!
I don't like holes in my garden,
Off—you—scoot!

