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Vol. 12

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Gaskell Zuree Mress





| ARE CLEVER :IAWRG. THE JARDINE HARRIER A LAUGHING JACKASS. <br> They Are the Most Valned of Austra$=5=$ <br> (Melbourre interer) $\square$ $\square$ $\square$ <br>  <br>  <br>  (Dacelo gigantea), from the resembdonkey. If you then pursue the subby the monosyllable "Snakes," for it is these polsonous reptiles, of which it festroys a goodly number in the course I do not mean to say, of course, that the glant kingfleher confines himsel entirely to an ophidian diet, for he eats lizards, harmless ones as well as some that are said to be vonomous, and also frogs and toads, not to mention whole hosts of cicades, mantides and tree leeches. Whether he ever catches fish, gener, is open to doubt, but I have been assured that he has been seen to do so. diving Into water holes for the purpose. It may be so-1 do not deny the possi- bility, but as he very frequently lives <br> IAUGHING TACKASS. $\square$ $\square$ $\begin{aligned} & \text { pursuits is an exceptional event in his } \\ & \text { aterwise blameless career. } \\ & \text { I once saw one of these birds catch } \\ & \text { a snake. It was a very hot day, and } \end{aligned}$ <br> $-$ $\square$ $\qquad$ lian trees that does not turn the edge of its leaves to the sun, which accounts $\qquad$ this respect and affords a little farer. Well, I had sat down point of dozing off came aware of the He was sitting motionless namesake $\qquad$ spot where 1 sat, and presently back to his perch with something gling in his bill. It was a snake, dently, that had been sleeping in $\qquad$ the neek and held it fast in spite of its violent struggles and writhings, bangIng its head against the hard bough o reduced the evi-looking thing pulpy condition, when he somewhat laxed his hold, braying the body, by inch, between his pow until the tfle was reduced to a limp and lifeles mass, not unlike a strip of recently cut bullock hide, which he tossed in th air, and, catehing it very cleverly b the tail, proceeded to enguif it in $h$ capacious maw, where the coiled u $\qquad$ I sat watching intently the uncanny proceedings. The dacelo had been too much engrossed in paring the snake for his eating to take any notice of me, where I sat within a few yards of him; but when he had ahriek compounded of laugh, groan and bray, and flew noisily off to digest his capture in peace elsewhere, As the Intestinal tract of the dacelo is com- paratively short, digestion with hitm is not a lengthened proceas; consequently he requires to eat often, as well as freely, and from early dawn to dusk he congumes an incredible quantity in he conse of a day, that varies alightly the course on in length throughout the antipodean year, the great extremes of summer and winter, days and nights, with which we are familiar in these latituies, there unknown. No wonder, then, that the laughing jackass-to give the bird his colonial name-is a favorite with the his the even $\square$ $\square$ $\square$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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