

New Zealand birds the kea was only very occasionally imported and then only to Zoos. Very few, I think, have been in private hands. Given a large outdoor aviary and a heap of large stones or rocks I see no reason why it should not breed.

Those in authority at Mount Cook offered to let me take away several keas. I already had four, which I believe are cock birds. I was offered hens, but somehow *I had not the heart to take the birds away from their happy little protected colony.* Perhaps if they had been in danger of extermination from the sheep farmers it might have been a different thing. My own birds came from a different district, and in time I may be able to procure hens.

Typical of New Zealand.

The kea stands for something so essentially New Zealand; not the New Zealand of to-day, but of that land of strange anomalies where, until the coming of the "pakeha," the unique vegetation and strange bird life reigned supreme.

Like all the other natural products of that country, it does not fit in with the scheme of things now. Barren hill-sides, destitute of the alpine vegetation, barbed wire fences, and corrugated iron sheds are no proper setting for the kea. Every native product is sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. The sheep farmers have extended their domains right up to the snow line and all the alpine flora has been burnt off; no single ledge or patch where a sheep might get a mouthful of grass has been spared.

The farmers in those regions, being true Britishers, had to kill something, and in those days before the introduction of the chamois and the thar the only living things were the sheep and the keas, so the kea had to pay the price. As he was not on the list of conventional sporting birds, an excuse had to be made for massacring this good-natured and inquisitive bird, so they said that he ate the sheep. To make this worse they said he ate the kidneys from living sheep. These stories are very much on a par with the stories told in the English country side of nightjars sucking goats' milk, of eagles carrying off children, and of cuckoos changing into hawks on the approach of winter.

Most observations of the ordinary person about birds are incorrect. It is quite an easy matter for a person to see keas examining a dead sheep, for they are exceedingly inquisitive birds, and for the rumour to grow and grow until it was seized upon as a commercial proposition.

"Stuffing" The Public.

In a New Zealand magazine appeared an article written some little time ago by a journalist obviously of the sensational school, and judging by the literary ability displayed, he had been taught by that