

ALBINO FANTAIL

By HENRY G. BAILEY.

THROUGHOUT the years we have been charmed by the presence of many native birds in this small garden sanctuary, some merely visitors, others making it a home in which to rear their little families. Amongst the latter are the fantails.

Last summer a pair of pied fantails had a lovely little family of three. I wonder if any reached maturity, one I know did not. I found it one evening on top of a stone pillar and beside a drinking fountain, just a wee tiny ball of fluff with its wee head tucked under its wing. It was not dead, but how helpless was I to revive it!

This little family was very interesting, but we got a greater thrill just a week ago. We were busy trying to entice a pair of pied fantails to come closer when my wife directed my

attention to what she thought was a little yellow canary. No canary ever had such a long tail for its size, or ever carried it in that erect position, so we discovered it to be a fantail. It soon started to demonstrate its dexterity in chasing flies, and came much closer, so that we were able to observe it both in flight and at rest on a branch.

Its plumage was of a creamy white, the breast slightly darker, a pale buff, and the tail when expanded appeared to be all white. When, however, it settled on a branch to enjoy a captured fly and closed its fan, the tail took on a dark colour.

Evidently the progeny of the pair of beautiful pied birds, it was, I would think, a case of an albino.

BRIDAL VEIL FALLS

By GORDON V. GOW.

THIS is the picturesque but very appropriate name of a very pretty waterfall in the Te Mata district in Raglan County.

The township of Te Mata is about five miles along a side road which branches from the main road to Raglan at a point some six miles from Raglan, and the falls are another five miles further on after passing the local store. Much publicity has been given to the falls of late as the result of an agitation by local residents and others to have the area embracing the falls safeguarded by the creation of a Domain Board or similar body which would be responsible for its care and preservation as well as for the reforestation of part of the area.

The access track from the road to the falls has lately been put in order and, after a pleasant walk of some minutes through the native bush, one suddenly emerges and finds oneself on the edge of a precipice looking down over a bush-covered valley, while the waters of the stream which the track has followed plunge over the abyss at one's feet.

On reaching the foot of the falls by means of a steep rugged track through the bush, and not till then, one sees the cascade to advantage.

As the waters descend through almost 200 feet of sheer drop the veil of spray is wafted this way and that in ever-changing form in a most fascinating manner. No wonder the choice of name for the falls is such a happy one.

The geological structure of the waterfall is interesting. Like most falls it depends for its existence on hard rock overlying a softer formation which latter in course of time erodes at a quicker rate.

In this case the uppermost material is columnar basaltic rock lying on sandstone. The appearance of the former is reminiscent of the famed Fingal's cave in the island of Staffa. The sandstone flanking three sides of the pool at the base of the fall, including the recessed space behind the curtain of falling waters, is clothed in a close growth of para-taniwha, that fascinating plant which is such a feature of the gorges of the Wanganui river. The constant showers of spray provide ideal conditions for this plant.