

afternoon I went down to the beach to see if, by any chance, he had returned, but the sea had called to him and he had obeyed. No doubt upon some lonely rock-bound island of Bass Strait he has found a home.

Notes on the Regent-Bird (*Sericulus melinus*).

BY P. A. GILBERT, SYDNEY.

AT Ourimbah, during October and November, 1909, in the company of Mr. H. Keane, a few observations were recorded, during our days in the scrub, on the habits of Regent-Birds (*Sericulus melinus*) found breeding.

3rd October, 1909.—Several pairs of Regent-Birds were seen flying to and fro in search of food, and probably on the look-out for a nesting site. They were observed feeding peacefully upon the berries of vines. The brilliant orange-yellow and sheeny black plumage of the male was in marked contrast to the sombre verdure of the undergrowth, as the sun's rays fell upon him whenever the foliage above permitted. The female, being more secretive in her movements, invariably kept well within the undergrowth.

4th October, 1909.—The birds were again seen, the males, owing to their conspicuous plumage, most frequently.

Our next visit to the same locality was on 13th November, 1909. I watched a female Regent-Bird fly into a thick clump of vine, and saw the leaves moving awhile as she hopped through. I decided to clamber into the vines above and investigate, while my friend, Mr. H. Keane, kept watch on the outskirts. My efforts were rewarded by a nest containing two incubated eggs. The nest was built in a tree densely covered with vines (*Vitis*), at an altitude of from 40 to 50 feet. The nest was constructed of fine dry sticks placed on a scanty foundation of coarser ones, the whole structure being secreted in a mass of the tangled vine, which afforded ample support.

14th November.—One male bird was seen on the wing, but not in proximity to the brooding female.

15th November.—Several female birds were observed, but, owing to the density of the vegetation, it was not ascertainable whether they were nesting. No males. I found another nest, placed much higher than the one containing eggs, but in growth less dense: height took the place of seclusion. This nest was the temporary habitation of two nestlings, apparently about eight or nine days old, and covered with a dull greyish down. I noted that they sat in the nest with their heads pointing south, and, as I had watched the parent bird fly in several times from

a southern peripheral point, I concluded that they were wont to look for their guardian in that direction.

Previous to nidification, Regent-Birds are to be seen in pairs around Ourimbah, but once incubation has commenced the male seems to retreat, leaving that function entirely to the female. Neither does the male seem to participate in nurturing the young. His brilliant plumage would, no doubt, betray the whereabouts of the female and her nestlings, whereas the female's plumage harmonizes with her surroundings, and that, together with her shy habits, enables her to move about obscurely.

Although I have no evidence myself, nor have I seen it stated elsewhere, still I have reasons for believing that the female Regent-Bird alone constructs the nest. On the Cambe-warra Mountain I had under observation two female Satin Bower-Birds (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) which were building. One was closely watched for several days, and in no instance did I see the male assisting in the construction of the nest, or even observe him in the immediate vicinity until the work was finished. It seems reasonable to suppose that the nidificating habits of the Satin Bower-Bird are similar to those of the Regent-Bird as regards the female alone building the nest.

Destruction of Birds.

BY J. W. MELLOR, A.O.U., FULHAM, S.A.

I HAVE received from Mr. Edward Millen, of Rosemount, Dawlish, South Devon, and once a resident of Echunga and Port Elliot, a letter relative to the destruction of birds for plumage and ornamental purposes, and also a copy of an issue of *The Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* containing a report of a lecture delivered by Mr. James Buckland on the same subject.

Mr. Millen writes :—

"From long residence in South Australia I know (who there does not?) that you are the friend and protector of birds. But I should not have sent the *Journal* had it only referred to that which is going on in the West Indies, Venezuela, United States of America, &c. Australia does not escape the destroyer, and before long, perhaps—no one can say—some 'undesirable immigrants' will land in South Australia bent on the destruction of as many of its plumage birds as possible. M. Rostand's play, 'Chantecler,' has given an impetus to the wearing of feathers in women's hats, which are now more than ever 'decorated' (?) or trimmed with large masses of them of all lengths and colours. It is not uncommon to see whole birds stuffed and doing service as hat 'ornaments' (?). What a shock it would be to a South Australian to see the wings of the Magpie used for mourning wear, or the pretty wing of the 'Jack' for gayer occasions! And what a gem-like ornament the stuffed skin of the Blue Wren would be, not to mention numerous other useful birds found in the Sunny South.