

XXVII.—*Letters, Announcements, &c.*

THE following letters, addressed “To the Editor of ‘The Ibis,’ ” have been received :—

SIR,—Allow me to confirm the statement respecting the bower-building habits of the Regent-bird (*Sericulus melinus*). Several years ago (September 23, 1861) I found what I thought was the bower of the Satin-bird (*Ptilonorhynchus holosericeus*) ; but it was a very small one, and in my diary I mentioned that “the only birds seen near it were two or three Regent-birds.” I thought no more of the matter until I saw some remarks on the subject by Mr. Coxen, of Brisbane [*Cf.* Gould, *Handb. B. Austral.* i. pp. 458–461]. During my visit to the Richmond River I determined to pay close attention to the fact, and was not long before I had an opportunity of making some observations. On the 2nd October, 1866, when returning to our camp, some twenty miles from the township, I stopped to look for an *Atrichia*, which, three days before, I had heard calling at a certain log ; and while standing, gun in hand, ready to fire as soon as the bird, which was at that moment in a remarkably mocking humour, should show itself, I was somewhat surprised at seeing a male Regent-bird fly down and sit within a yard of me. Between the two I hardly knew which choice to take—the *Atrichia*, which was singing close in front of me, or the chance of finding the long-wished-for bower. I decided on the former, and remained motionless for full five minutes, while the Regent-bird hopped round me, and finally on to the ground at my feet, when, looking down, I saw the bower scarcely a yard from where I was standing : had I stepped down off the log I must have crushed it. The bird, after hopping about it, and rearranging some of the shells (*Helices*) and berries, with which its centre was filled, took its departure, much to my relief, for I was beginning to feel uncomfortable with standing so long in the same position. Further research was not very successful ; we met with only one other bower. Wishing to obtain a living specimen of so beautiful a bird as the old male of this species, I determined to leave the structure until the last thing on my final return to Lismore, which was on the 3rd of November following. We then stopped



on our way, and, setting eight snares round the bower, anxiously awaited the result. It was not long before we heard the harsh scolding cry of the old bird, and knew that he had "put his foot in it." Having taken him out and transferred him to a temporary cage, we carefully pushed a board, brought for the purpose, underneath the bower and removed it without injury. It is now before me, and is placed upon and supported by a platform of sticks, which, crossing each other in various directions, form a solid foundation, into which the upright twigs are stuck. This platform is about 14 inches long by 10 broad, the upright twigs are some 10 or 12 inches high, and the entrances 4 inches wide. The middle measures 4 inches across, and is filled with land shells of five or six species, and several kinds of berries of various colours, blue, red, and black, which gave it, when fresh, a very pretty appearance. Besides these there were several newly-picked leaves and young shoots of a pinkish tint, the whole showing a decided "taste for the beautiful" on the part of this species.

I remain, &c.

EDWARD P. RAMSAY.

Dobroyde,  
March 12, 1867.

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South African Museum, Capetown,  
June 17th, 1867.

SIR,—The recent acquisition of some, to me, new and rare eggs, belonging to birds which breed on some of the islands in the inhospitable Antarctic regions, induces me to forward you a few notes on them and on the habits of some of the birds of those regions.

The eggs, together with a collection of skins of several species of birds, and a fine skin of the male Sea-elephant (*Macrorhinus proboscidius*) were brought from the Crozette Islands by Captain Armson, who commands a vessel plying between this port and the islands, bringing up oil obtained from the Sea-elephants caught at the stations on that group. Captain Armson is becoming more and more enthusiastic in his researches as he experiences the pleasures of the study; and I need scarcely say his observations increase in value. Many of them I have had con-