PTILONORHYNCHUS VIOLACEUS (*Vieill.*).

Satin Bower-bird.

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The present species is the best known of all the Bower-birds, not only from its common occurrence in Australia, but also on account of its having been frequently seen in our Zoological Gardens, where it constructs in captivity those wonderful bowers with which its name is associated.

The distribution of the Satin Bower-bird in Australia is extensive, reaching as it does from Rockingham Bay and the Port Denison district to New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia.

The late Mr. John Gould gave an excellent account of the Satin Bower-bird in his 'Birds of Australia':—

"It is a stationary species, but appears to roam from one part of a district to another, either for the purpose of varying the nature, or of obtaining a more abundant supply of food. Judging from the contents of the stomachs of the many specimens I dissected, it would seem that it is altogether frugivorous, or if not exclusively so, that insects form but a small portion of its diet. Independently of numerous berry-bearing plants and shrubs, the brushes it inhabits are studded with enormous fig-trees, to the fruit of which it is especially partial. It appears to have particular times in the day for feeding, and when thus engaged among the low shrub-like trees, I have approached within a few feet without creating alarm; but at other times the birds were extremely shy and watchful, especially the old males, which not unfrequently perch on the topmost branch or dead limb of the loftiest tree in the forest, whence they can survey all round, and watch the movements of their females and young in the brush below.

"In autumn they associate in small flocks, and may often be seen on the ground near the sides of rivers, particularly where the brush descends in a steep bank to the water's edge.

"The extraordinary bower-like structure first came under my notice in the Sydney Museum, to which an example had been presented by Charles Coxen, Esq., of Brisbane, as the work of the Satin Bower-bird. This so much interested me that I determined to leave no means untried for ascertaining every particular relating to this peculiar feature in the bird's economy; and on visiting the cedar-brushes of the Liverpool range, I discovered several of these bowers or playing-places on the ground, under the shelter of the branches of overhanging trees, in the most retired part of the forest: they differed considerably in size, some being a third larger than others. The base consists of an extensive and rather convex platform of sticks firmly interwoven, on the centre of which the bower itself is built: this, like the platform on which it is placed, and with which it is interwoven, is formed of sticks and twigs, but of a more slender and flexible description, the tips of the twigs so arranged as to curve inwards and nearly meet at the top: in the interior the materials are so placed that the forks of the

Mintern Bros. imp.
PTILONORHYNCHUS VIOLACEUS (Vieill.).
W. Hart, del. et lith.