

tendency to its equilibrium being destroyed when it is placed in a vertical position. A second peculiarity is the extreme thinness of the shell, and its consequent fragility. This is so great, that unless the egg is handled with the greatest care, it is sure to be broken, and every effort which has been made to hatch these eggs under domestic fowls has failed, the egg having in every instance been broken by the bird under which it was placed.

"The native name for the bird on the Murray River is *Marrak-ko* or *Marra-ko*; in Western Australia the name of the bird is *Ngow-o* or *Ngow*. The name in Western Australia is given from the tuft on its head, *Ngoweer* meaning a tuft of feathers.

"I have found this bird in different parts of that portion of Australia included between the 26th and 36th parallels of south latitude, and the 113th and 141st parallels of east longitude, and I think that there is every probability that it inhabits a much wider range. It is found in all the scrubby districts of South Australia.

"Yours truly,

G. GREY."

"December 14th.

"P.S.—I have, by cross examination of several natives, elicited the following account of this bird, and I am quite satisfied of its truth.

"There is only one male and one female to each nest: they repair an old nest, and do not build a new one; both assist in scratching the sand to the nest. The female commences laying about the beginning of September, or when the spear-grass begins to shoot. Both sexes approach the nest together when the female is about to lay, and they take an equal share in the labour of covering and uncovering the mound. After every sunrise the female lays an egg, and lays altogether from eight to ten. If the natives rob the nest, the female will lay again in the same nest, but she will only lay the full number of eggs twice in one summer. From the commencement of building, until the last eggs are hatched, four moons elapse (this would give a very long period of time before the eggs were hatched). The young one scratches its way out alone; the mother does not assist it. They usually come out one at a time; occasionally a pair appear together. The mother, who is feeding in the scrub in the vicinity, hears its call and runs to it. She then takes care of the young one as a European hen does of its chick. When the young are all hatched the mother is accompanied by eight or ten young ones, who remain with her until they are more than half-grown. The male bird does not accompany them. The two sexes have different calls: that of the female is constantly uttered while she walks about in the scrub with her young ones.

"The natives frequently find the eggs and nests, but they seldom see the old birds, which are very timid and quick-sighted. They run very fast, like the Emu, roost on trees, and live for a long time without water, but drink when it rains. The natives state that the *Entozoa* which I found in the bird mentioned above were unusual, and that it must have been in ill health.

"It is a remarkably stout, compact bird, and appears, when alive, to have as large a body as the female turkey, but it is shorter on the legs."

To this valuable account I may add the following, furnished by Mr. Gilbert:—

"Wongan Hills, Western Australia, September 28, 1842.

"This morning I had the good fortune to penetrate into the dense thicket I had been so long anxious to visit in search of the *Leipoa*'s eggs, and had not proceeded far before the native who was with me told me to keep a good look-out, as we were among the *Ngou-oo*'s hillocks, and in half an hour after we found one, around which the brush was so thick that we were almost running over before seeing it; so anxious was I to see the hidden treasures within that in my haste I threw aside the black fellow and began scraping off the upper part of the mound; this did not at all please him, and he became very indignant, at the same time making me understand, 'that as I had never seen this nest before I had better trust to him to get out the eggs, or I should, in my haste and impatience, certainly break them.' I therefore let him have his own way, and he began scraping off the earth very carefully from the centre, throwing it over the side, so that the mound very soon presented the appearance of a huge basin; about two feet in depth of earth was in this way thrown off, when the large ends of two eggs met my anxious gaze; both these eggs were resting on their smaller apex, and the earth around them had to be very carefully removed to avoid breaking the shell, which is extremely fragile when first exposed to the atmosphere; this mound was about three feet in height and seven to nine feet in circumference; the form, as left by the bird, was in outline the segment of a circle. About a hundred yards from this first nest we came upon a second, rather larger, of the same external form and appearance; it contained three eggs. Although we saw seven or eight more