

the larger end; other less common types have varying shades of ground colour between reddish-salmon and purplish-red. They vary in numbers between two and four to a sitting, the usual number being three. Measurements of a typical clutch are 1.15 x 0.8 inches, 1.11 x 0.79 inches, 1.03 x 0.75 inches.

In November, 1934, I was in Maryborough, Queensland. Little Friar-birds were very common in the gardens and several pairs were seen feeding young in the nest. The food was carried to the young birds by both parents and appeared to consist entirely of insects. Although this bird is grouped with the honeyeaters, it is doubtful whether nectar forms any part of its diet, its food consisting mainly of insects with some seeds and probably fruits—native and otherwise. Dr. W. D. K. MacGillivray, writing of this species, says: "Near Blackall seen feasting on the flowers of the Queamurra (*Eremophila bignoniæflora*).". That suggests that the bird was drinking nectar, although they were possibly taking insects from the flowers.

It is a very noisy bird with harsh calls resembling those of other Friar-birds, uttered constantly during the day, even in the hottest weather. The species appears to be migratory to Victoria, arriving in September and October, and immediately commencing to nest. In Queensland its breeding extends from October to April.

"Glutinous" Threads.—Concerning the "glutinous substance" now reproduced so clearly for the third time in *The Emu* I have seen it many times with Yellow Robins and other insectivorous birds, and have always assumed it to be spider silk. I think there could be little doubt that it was silk in the case of some Yellow Robins, for I was close enough to see that a large spider had been fed to the nestling.

As is well known, silk issues from the spinnerets in liquid form, hardening on exposure to the air. The parent bird would probably grip a spider by the abdomen, pressure resulting in the emission of some silk. This, when exposed to the air, would adhere to the bill of the parent bird and more silk would be drawn out of the spinnerets as it withdrew its bill.

One often sees silk adhering to the heads and bills of both parents and nestlings after food has been delivered. In that instance, however, it is usually the surrounding silk of spider cocoons or the spider's snare, which has been inadvertently conveyed to the nestlings. I have seen parents picking it off their nestlings. This is very different in appearance from the thread-like "stream" which appears to issue from the body of a spider victim, or a larva.

We must not lose sight of the fact that silk issues in the same liquid form from the bodies of many butterflies and moth larvae which are fed to nestlings, so it may not always be spider silk.—EDITH COLEMAN, Blackburn, Vic., 9/11/38.