

P R E F A C E.

HAVING in the summer of 1837 brought my work on the "Birds of Europe" to a successful termination, I was naturally desirous of turning my attention to the Ornithology of some other region; and a variety of concurring circumstances induced me to select that of Australia, the Birds of which, though invested with the highest degree of interest, had been almost entirely neglected. Dr. Shaw, in his "Zoology of New Holland," had devoted a few plates to the subject, from specimens collected by Sir Joseph Banks during the first voyage of Captain Cook; the "Birds of New Holland" by Lewin comprised not more than twenty-six plates; and figures and descriptions of a few species were given in the earlier voyages of Phillip, White and Collins, and the more recent one of King. At a subsequent period the late Mr. Vigors and Dr. Horsfield commenced an elaborate memoir on the Collection of Australian Birds in the possession of the Linnean Society; but unfortunately, they did not proceed farther than the *Meliphagidae*, and the non-completion of their labours is the more to be regretted, inasmuch as the Linnean Society's collection of Australian birds, at that time the finest extant, comprised many species collected by Mr. Brown during his voyage with the celebrated navigator Flinders, and was moreover enriched with some interesting notes by the late Mr. George Caley, by whom the collection was chiefly formed. Descriptions of many Australian birds were also included in the works of Latham, Shaw, Cuvier and Vieillot, as well as in several of the recent French voyages of discovery; still no general work on the subject had been undertaken, and nearly all that had been recorded by the various writers above enumerated, had reference almost exclusively to the productions of New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, these being almost the only explored portions of that great country. In the absence, then, of any general work on the Birds of Australia, the field was comparatively a new one, and of no ordinary degree of interest, from the circumstance of its being one of the

finest possessions of the British Crown, and from its natural productions being as remarkable for the anomalous nature of their forms, as for their beauty, and the singularity of their habits. In the attempt to supply this desideratum I commenced publishing from the materials then accessible, but soon found, from the paucity of information extant upon the subject, that it could not be executed in a manner that would be satisfactory to my own mind or commensurate with the exigencies of science; I therefore determined to proceed to Australia and personally investigate (so far as a stay of two years would allow) the habits and manners of its birds in a state of nature. Accordingly in May 1838 I left England, provided, by the liberality of Government, with letters from Lord Glenelg, at that time Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir George Grey, Bart., and Gordon Gairdner, Esq., of the Colonial Office, recommending me to the countenance and protection of the various Governors, and requesting them to afford me such aid and assistance in furtherance of my objects as they might have it in their power to render; similar favours were also granted me by the authorities of the Admiralty, who, through their Secretary, Sir John Barrow, directed the captains and commanders of Her Majesty's ships and vessels employed on the coasts of Australia to further my views, by giving myself and my assistant a passage to such part of the coasts as either of us might be desirous of visiting, only stipulating that the ships under their command should not be detained on any parts of the coasts they were not ordered to visit. His late Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, in his capacity of President of the Royal Society, was pleased to favour me with a letter addressed to the authorities, civil and military, of Her Majesty's Colonies, recommending me to their kind offices and protection, as he felt assured that my exertions would materially promote the interests of Natural History. I was also under considerable obligations to the kindness of Captain Washington, R.N., at that time Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society, who furnished me with introductions to Captains Sir John Franklin and Sir Gordon Bremer, R.N., and other influential persons. Having thus acknowledged the facilities afforded me by the home authorities, it becomes my pleasing duty to state that their recommendations and wishes were responded to in the warmest manner by Captain Sir John Franklin, R.N., Governor of Van Diemen's Land; Sir George Gipps, Governor-General of New South Wales; Lieut.-Colonel Gawler, Governor of South Australia; John Hutt, Esq., Governor of Western Australia; and Captain McArthur, Commandant of Port Essington; all of whom rendered me every assistance compatible with the instructions under which they were acting. I should be wanting, however, both in courtesy and gratitude, did I not especially acknowledge the warm friendship, and the many acts of genuine kindness which I received at the hands of my valued

friends Sir John and Lady Franklin, who, besides facilitating my views in every way, both publicly and privately, with the most generous hospitality received myself and family into their house, where Mrs. Gould and my eldest son, who had accompanied us, remained for nearly ten months, while I pursued my researches in various parts of Van Diemen's Land and the continent of Australia; and it is only by those who, like myself, have had the advantage of residing in the bosom of this amiable family, that the kindness of their nature and the goodness of their hearts can be duly appreciated, and which can never be erased from my memory. I must acknowledge not less gratefully the many acts of kindness rendered to me by Sir George and Lady Gipps during my stay in Sydney. After exploring Van Diemen's Land, the islands in Bass's Straits, South Australia, and New South Wales, into the interior of which country I penetrated to the distance of nearly four hundred miles from the coast-line, I despatched my able assistant, Mr. Gilbert, to explore the western and northern portions of the country, and returned to England in August 1840; I immediately commenced the work *de novo*, and the result of my labours is now before the public. It fortunately happened at the commencement and during the progress of the work, Her Majesty's ships the Beagle, under the command of Captains Wickham and Stokes; the Britomart, under Captain Stanley; the Fly, under Captain Blackwood, and the Pelorus under Captain Chambers were employed in surveying the northern and north-western coasts of Australia; and the Erebus and Terror under Captain Sir James C. Ross, in a voyage of discovery towards the south pole. While engaged in the performance of their arduous duties, the officers of those vessels succeeded in procuring many interesting novelties, which, with the greatest liberality, were communicated to me for the present work, whereby its value has been much enhanced. This liberality will be found duly acknowledged in the histories of the species, for the use of which I am indebted to the kindness of B. Bynoe, Esq., Surgeon R.N., Lieut. Emery, R.N., Commander J. M. R. Ince, R.N., Edward Dring, Esq., Purser R.N., Dr. Robertson and Robert M'Cormick, Esq., Surgeons R.N., and John M'Gillivray, Esq.

After spending two years in Western and Northern Australia, Mr. Gilbert returned to England in September 1841, bringing with him the result of his labours, which proved of sufficient value and importance to induce me to believe that much yet remained to be discovered in those countries, and to direct him to return thither, which he accordingly did in the ensuing spring; and after again visiting Swan River, and sedulously exploring the interior so far as practicable, he proceeded to Sydney, and, unfortunately for himself, allowed his love

of science, in the advancement of which no one was more ardent, to induce him to join Dr. Leichardt in his overland journey from Moreton Bay to Port Essington. On this expedition, he, as usual, displayed his wonted zeal and activity until the 28th of June, when, the party being treacherously attacked by the natives, his valuable life was sacrificed, I lost a most able coadjutor, and science has to deplore one of her most devoted servants; fortunately, however, in despite of the many difficulties and dangers which beset the party during the remainder of their journey, his journals and notes, together with the specimens he had been able to procure, were preserved and transmitted to me by Dr. Leichardt, and proved of valuable assistance in determining the range of many of the species.

My own researches commenced immediately after passing the Equator, from whence, throughout the entire route to Australia, I omitted no opportunity of studying the habits, and collecting the different species of the oceanic birds that came under my notice: these observations were again resumed on my return to England; and as the outward passage was by the Cape of Good Hope, and the homeward one by Cape Horn, they extended round the globe, and, as will be seen in the course of the work, have led to some important results. And here I must acknowledge my obligations to the various captains with whom I sailed, namely Captain M'Kellar of the "Parsee," which vessel conveyed me to Van Diemen's Land; Captain Harding of the "Black Joke," in which I proceeded from Launceston to Adelaide; Captain Fell of the "Catherine Stewart Forbes," in which I returned from Adelaide to Hobart Town; Captain Gilchrist of the "Potentate," in which I sailed from Hobart Town to Sydney; and Lieutenant Mallard, R.N., of the "Kinneir," which brought me to England; all of whom rendered me every assistance in their power, and the use of a boat and crew whenever the weather would admit of one being lowered, by which means I was enabled to obtain nearly forty species of Petrel, being the finest collection of the *Procellariide* ever brought together.

At the commencement of the work it was not expected that it would prove so extensive as it has become, since not more than about 300 species were then known, which number has now been increased, by the united efforts of myself and those who have so kindly aided my views, to upwards of 600 species, among which are comprised many forms remarkable for their novelty, the anomalous character of their structure, and the singularity of their habits, such as the Bower Birds (*Ptilonorhynchi* and *Chlamyderæ*) and the Mound-raising Birds (*Talegalla*, *Leipoa* and

Megapodius). The singular runs or bowers of the *Chlamydera* were considered by some explorers to be the cradles of the infants of the aborigines, and the mounds of the *Megapodius* to be tumuli, errors which have been rectified in the present work.

It is not to be supposed that an undertaking of such magnitude as the present could have been brought to a successful termination by the unaided efforts of a single individual, and I have, therefore, very great pleasure in stating that my views were most ably seconded by every one with whom the nature of my investigations brought me in contact; but by none more than by the Rev. Thomas James Ewing, who, besides manifesting the warmest friendship, has ever taken especial interest in promoting the success of the present work; nor must I omit to mention R. C. Gunn, Esq., Lieut. Breton, R.N., the Hon. Henry Elliot, Aide-du-camp to the Governor, Lieut. Friend, R.N., and Captain Booth, all of Van Diemen's Land. In New South Wales my best thanks are due to George Bennett, Esq., who, like Mr. Ewing, favoured me with his warmest friendship, and evinced an equal anxiety for the success of my undertaking; the Messrs. James and William M'Arthur, of Camden; the Messrs. Stephen and Charles Cosen, of Yarrundi; Charles Throsby, Esq., of Bong-bong; Alexander and William S. MacLeay, Esqs.; Captain P. P. King, and many others. Much valuable information has been communicated to me by George Grey, Esq. (now Governor of New Zealand), whose exertions during his expedition along the north-western coasts of Australia were characterized by a degree of energy of character and perseverance but rarely equalled; whose ornithological collection made during this arduous enterprise, although small, was by no means destitute of interest; and who, upon succeeding Colonel Gawler in the Governorship of South Australia, found time amidst his multifarious occupations to devote considerable attention to Natural History, and to send me some interesting drawings and other details respecting the mounds raised by the *Leipoa*, &c. In South Australia I received many acts of kind attention and assistance from my friend Captain Sturt, whom I accompanied on one of his expeditions into the interior; and I have much pleasure in acknowledging my obligations to Mr. Eyre, now Lieut.-Governor of New Zealand, and the late J. B. Harvey, Esq.

Nor must I conclude my acknowledgements of the kindness of those who have rendered me their aid, without especially recording the liberality of the Right Hon. The Earl of Derby, who has at all times most readily submitted to my inspection every collection of which he has become the possessor, and allowed me the free use of any objects desirable for the enhance-

ment of the "Birds of Australia;" neither is the kindness of His Highness the Prince of Canino, Sir Wm. Jardine, Bart., Robert Brown, Professor Owen, H. E. Strickland, W. Yarrell, T. C. Eyton, J. J. Bennett, D. W. Mitchell, and E. Blyth, Esqs., forgotten by one whom they have ever been sedulous to oblige. My thanks are also due to the Trustees, to J. E. Gray, and G. R. Gray, Esqs., of the British Museum; and to the authorities of the Linnean and Zoological Societies of London, the Royal Museums of Berlin, Leyden and Paris, and the Museum at Sydney. I am also considerably indebted to my friend W. C. L. Martin, Esq., author of many valuable works and papers on natural history, for the readiness with which his varied literary attainments and critical acumen have at all times been rendered, whenever solicited, to enhance the accuracy of my labours.

At the conclusion of my "Birds of Europe," I had the pleasing duty of stating that nearly the whole of the Plates had been lithographed by my amiable wife. Would that I had the happiness of recording a similar statement with regard to the present work; but such, alas! is not the case, it having pleased the All-wise Disposer of Events to remove her from this sublunary world within one short year after our return from Australia, during her sojourn in which country an immense mass of drawings, both ornithological and botanical, were made by her inimitable hand and pencil, and which has enabled Mr. H. C. Richter, to whom, after her lamented death, the execution of the Plates was entrusted, to perform his task in a manner highly satisfactory to myself, and I trust equally so to the Subscribers. The colouring, as in the case of the "Birds of Europe," and my other works, has been entirely executed by Mr. Bayfield, to whose unwearied exertions and punctuality I must not fail to bear testimony, as well as to the minute accuracy with which his labours have been performed. The printing of the Plates, by Messrs. Hullmandel and Walton, and the letter-press, by Messrs. R. and J. E. Taylor, has also been equally satisfactory.

And I cannot refrain from speaking in the highest terms of my assistant, Mr. Edwin C. Prince, who has been with me from the commencement of my various works. I left him in charge of the whole of my affairs during my absence from England, with a perfect conviction that he would zealously exert himself for my interest, and the confidence I reposed in him has been fully realized, not only during my absence, but during the long period of eighteen years.

It was my most anxious wish that the unique and perfect collection of Australian Birds,

forming the originals of the present work, should have found a resting-place in the National Museum of this country, inasmuch as it comprised examples of both sexes of nearly every known species in various stages of plumage, each carefully labelled with its correct scientific appellation, the date when and the place where killed, the sex ascertained by dissection, and the colouring of the soft parts; besides which, it comprised the finest specimens I had been able to procure during the long period of ten years, collected together at an expense of more than £2000, and at the cost of three valuable lives, namely, that of Mr. Gilbert above referred to; that of Mr. Johnson Drummond, who was killed by a native while seeking for specimens in Western Australia; and that of a fine young man, one of the attendants assigned to me by Sir John Franklin, who was accidentally killed by the explosion of a gun he was removing from a boat when landing on one of the islands in Bass's Straits. Regretting that I could not afford to make a donation of it, I addressed a letter to J. E. Gray, Esq., the chief Zoological officer of the British Museum, in which, after stating that the entire collection amounted to nearly 600 species, and upwards of 1800 specimens, with the full complements of eggs of more than 300 species, I made the following offer,—“I believe that in some instances the Government has lent its aid and support to works of such magnitude as the ‘Birds of Australia’ by taking a certain number of copies; were this done in my own case, and not less than twenty-five copies were taken, I should be most happy to present to the Museum both the Collections above-mentioned, but should such an arrangement be declined then I beg to offer them to the Trustees for the sum of £1000.” To my own, as well as to the regret of nearly every scientific man in Europe, my offer was declined by the Trustees. Upon this circumstance becoming known to Edward Wilson, Esq., of Lydstip House, near Tenby in Pembrokeshire, that gentleman immediately purchased the entire collection for his brother, Dr. T. B. Wilson, of Philadelphia in North America, whither it will be shortly removed, and where it will be at all times available for the purposes of science, and form a portion of perhaps the most extensive ornithological collection in the world.

In conclusion I would beg to say, that having brought the “Birds of Australia” to a close, after devoting nearly ten years to its production, I trust it will be admitted that it has been terminated in the same spirit with which it was commenced, and that any errors which may be found will be viewed with leniency, when the extent of the work, and the difficulty of procuring and arranging so large a mass of materials, is taken into consideration; should my labours, such as they are, merit the approbation of those who have so liberally supported it,

my own efforts will be amply repaid. Although the work comprises every species known to inhabit Australia up to the present time, it is not to be supposed that it contains the whole of the birds of that vast country, of which so large a portion is yet a *terra incognita*. Every new district towards the north-west that may be explored will doubtless afford additional species, and which may hereafter form the materials for a supplement.

I originally intended to include the Birds of New Zealand in the present work, but upon further investigation of the subject I found that they belong to a distinct Fauna, which fact, coupled with the vast accession of new species from the continent of Australia, induced me to omit all but those that had been published in the first instance, and one or two others remarkable for their great interest.

Enjoying, by the blessing of Providence, constant good health, and energies as yet unimpaired, I propose still to devote my humble efforts to the advancement of Ornithology, that science which treats of one of the most pleasing portions of the Almighty's many wonderful works; and with ample materials at my command for illustrating the Birds of another magnificent portion of the domains of the British Crown—India—my next work will probably be on "the Birds of Asia," which will, irrespective of all other considerations, be of no little interest as forming the connecting link between the Birds of Europe and the Birds of Australia.

JOHN GOULD.

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