

Fairy Dove Petrel (*Prion desolatus*).—Might be better included in list of species breeding in sub-Antarctic Islands of New Zealand, from which two sub-species are recognised in the Manual.

Yellow-nosed Albatross (*Diomedea chlororhynchus*).—Nestling, eggs, and nesting-place stated in the Manual to be unknown, though Dr. Macgillivray, in his article, mentions breeding colonies found on Tristan d'Acunha by Mr. Keytel.

Fregetta tubulata, *Prion belcheri*.—These two species were described on Australian specimens, but breeding grounds are unknown.

The "Times" on John Gould*

True zoological science is the creation of the present era. In a wide sense, this science includes the organic structure of the animal creation, the arrangement according to their natural affinities of the great groups composing it, and also of the members of those groups from families to *genera*. From the time of Ray and Linnæus to that of Cuvier, artificial systems, founded upon assumed principles, prevailed. But Cuvier brought anatomy to bear upon zoology, and zoology became elevated into its true position. Linnæus was an avowed formalist; but before we condemn, we must take into consideration the time in which he wrote, the limitation of the materials at his command, the confusion in which he found science, and the necessity in which he was placed of reducing the *disjecta membra* around him into something like order. His bold idea of a general system of

*The Public Library of Brisbane is fortunate in possessing a set of eight volumes of John Gould's *Birds of Australia*, which are not only in excellent order, but have their value added to by the inclusion of interesting relics. These comprise an autograph letter from Gould, written in 1851; a newspaper clipping giving over three columns of critical appreciation of the general work of the great ornithologist, taken from the London *Times* of September 3, 1851; and a full-page impression of the author, inscribed by the artist, "T. H. Maguire, 1849." This date being a year later than that of the issue of the *Birds of Australia*, it follows that the page bearing the portrait is inset. The insertion, however, has been executed so neatly as to be hardly noticeable, though attention is directed to the fact by stains that have developed on the particular page. Beneath the portrait is the inscription, "John Gould, F.R.S., F.L.S., etc., Fellow of the Ipswich Museum."

The *Times* review has for caption, "The Ornithological Publications of John Gould, F.R.S.," to which is added a footnote giving the following list of the author's works at date:—

A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains; A Monograph of the Rhamphastidæ, or Family of Toucans; A Monograph of the Trogonidæ, or Family of Trogons; Zoology of the Beagle—Part Birds; A Synopsis of the Birds of Australia; The Birds of Australia; Introduction to the Birds of Australia; A Monograph of the Macropodidæ, or the Family of Kangaroos; The Quadrupeds of Australia; A Monograph of the Odontophorinæ, or Part-ridges of America; Icones Avium; The Birds of Asia; The Humming Birds, or Trochilidæ. (The two latter in course of publication.)



JOHN GOULD

John Gould

A Distinguished Worker
in Australian Ornithology

John Gould, the greatest of all bird-men.

Nature, and his precise binary nomenclature, defining in two words genus and species, are at once proofs of his intellectual strength and acumen.

Many thanks, my dear Sir,
for your kind note: the
australian plants are all
from nature and their
names are given wherever
they could be ascertained
with certainty. M?

McGillivray is I believe
in town and residing
at 37 Gloucester Street
Queen Square, Bloomsbury

Ever my dear Sir

Yours truly & obliged

W. Dampier

London 20 Broad St.

Galena 15/4/51

J. M. Gould

over

Letter, portrait, and article, as reproduced herewith, are of particular interest at the present time, and thanks are due to various Queensland Government officials for facilitating the making of copies, namely, Messrs. P. J. McDermott (Under Chief Secretary), E. G. Scriven (Under Secretary for Agriculture), J. Brown (Chief Librarian), and H. W. Mobsby and J. W. Sanderson (photographers). Mr. McDermott supplies the information that the relics were in the books when the set was purchased by the Queensland Government in London.—A. H. Chisholm, State Secretary, Queensland.

After Linnæus came other labourers into the field, and among them, as a star of the first order, the immortal Cuvier. The progress of zoology began now to receive a new impulse. Throughout every branch of this science the impetus was communicated, and in that of ornithology more particularly rapid advancement was made. At the close of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century the stores of ornithology, so scanty in the time of Linnæus, were almost daily increased by new accessions from various parts of the world, for now islands and continents began to be more ardently explored, and vessels of research returned from their surveys, with specimens of the *fauna* and *flora* of the regions visited. The acquisition of treasures excited the thirst for fresh novelties. The plains of India were open—the chains of the Ghauts attracted the sportsman. The Nepal and Himalaya Ranges were accessible—vast tracts of Australia were receiving a tide of European colonisation. The Oceanic clusters of palm-clothed isles were becoming familiar. South America was penetrated, its forests trodden, its mountains scaled, and its Pampas traversed by men keen in the course of science. As geognosy became more extensive, so zoological knowledge increased in a like ratio, and in the department of ornithology more particularly, the most interesting discoveries were made. The continental naturalists were all on the alert; the zoology of voyagers was published, and valued works from the pens of Temminck, Vieillot, De Blainville, L'Herminier, and a host of philosophic ornithologists and general zoologists, were given to the world with, till then, unexampled rapidity; nor was England in the background. Between the years 1821 and 1824 appeared Latham's useful, if not brilliant, *General History of Birds*—a work of reference—and Selby's *British Ornithology*, a costly publication, was welcomed by the public. But in this brief survey it is almost invidious to mention some names to the exclusion of others; yet we cannot pass over Wilson, the eloquent author of the *Birds of America*, for we claim him as a British naturalist.

At this crisis, under the auspices of Mr. Vigors, Sir H. Davy, Sir Stamford Raffles, and others, the Zoological Society of London was established. This institution became the depository of the noble Rafflesian collection, to which, in the ornithological department, the late Mr. Vigors added largely. The museum of the Linnæan Society had already received a valuable series of birds from Australia; the museum of the Hon. East India Company became enriched by collections from India, Malay, and the great Malayan Islands. The British Museum brought her stores to light, and adding to these, through the zeal of her talented officers, now presents us with an ornithological series that may vie with the finest which Paris or Leyden or Frankfort can produce. When once public feeling is directed to the furtherance of a good object, how much may be effected! A spirit for the maintenance of our national character in a scientific point of view had gone forth. Private collections of ornithology were made. A nobleman, alike exalted by his rank and by his

private virtues, not only exerted himself in the cause of science by giving the weight of his influence with the leading societies or institutions of this nature which grace our island, but by himself establishing, at no trifling cost, an aviary for the study of rare species of birds "after the life," and the introduction of some as adopted species, and still more by the establishment of a museum of extraordinary ornithological richness, and a collection of original drawings perhaps unequalled in Europe.

It was at this juncture, under circumstances the most favourable, with a peculiar predisposition for the study of ornithology, to which he had for years devoted himself, and with an artistic feeling for the delineation of the feathered tribes, that Mr. Gould, whose works constitute the special objects of our notice, began a career which has conducted him to well-merited renown—a career, we rejoice to say, calling him to renewed labours, with fresh laurels in full view. The works of Mr. Gould constitute a new epoch in the history of ornithology. We may look at them in several points. The boldness of the plan on which they were executed, involving a fearful amount of outlay, and depending on their merit alone as a guarantee from heavy pecuniary loss; the number of new species added to science, and of doubtful species cleared away from previous obscurity; the unadorned fidelity of the descriptions; the exquisite accuracy of the plates, in which the utmost adherence to Nature is united with that felicitous effect which stamps the artist, and proves (unlike what we tolerate in Latham and ridicule in Catesby—*viz.*, false drawing, hardness, and inelegance, unredeemed by precision) that grace and truthfulness may meet together. Again, Mr. Gould's works form in themselves an ornithological museum, pictorial we grant, but of such a character as to obviate the necessity of a collection of mounted specimens obtained at no trifling cost, and preserved, even where room can be afforded for them, not without the greatest trouble. Of course, we say this with reference more particularly to his *Birds of Europe*, to his *Monographs of the Toucans*, of the *Trogons*, to the *Birds of Australia*, to the *Partridges and Quails of America*, and to the *Humming Birds* and *Birds of Asia*, now in the course of publication.

We have said that the works of Mr. Gould constitute a new epoch in the history of ornithology, and we say so advisedly. Let it not be supposed that we deny great credit to others—to writers on certain departments of ornithology who have admirably illustrated their subject. Nor can praise be denied to many well-written works of a popular nature, which in themselves suffice to prove the vast advance which zoological science has made, and its impress on the public mind. But from all these Mr. Gould's works stand out in bold relief—that are "themselves alone." We do not here forget Audubon's *Birds of America*, with his *Biography*; but, without undervaluing the labours of that energetic zoologist, the hardness of whose often well-drawn illustrations, and the inflated style of whose imaginative descrip-

tions, might bear a passing censure, we repeat our assertion. This assertion, however, we ought to prove, or at least attempt to justify.

Let us give a rapid sketch of Mr. Gould's labours. In a position which brought under the notice of Mr. Gould a collection of birds from the Himalaya Mountains most of the species new to science, and described either by himself or his friend Mr. Vigors in the proceedings of the Zoological Society, he selected a hundred of peculiarly interesting species, many of them pheasants (properly speaking) of gorgeous plumage, and conceived the idea of publishing a work entitled *A Century of Birds from the Himalaya Mountains*. In his artistic figures he was ably seconded by one now no more—one whose hand filled up his sketches even after his return from Australia, and was not idle in delineating native flowers or fruits, insects, and birds, for future use during a sojourn in that distant country. The *Century* (in imperial folio) may be regarded as the type, in its style, its size, and mode of illustration, of all his subsequent publications, albeit at every stage of future progress decided improvement has been marked in clear characters.

This work was well received; it deserved to be so. It was a new idea; it demonstrated how birds might be drawn and coloured; and, besides, was intrinsically valuable to the professed ornithologist, whether British or continental.

To attempt more when something has been achieved is surely a laudable ambition. That Mr. Gould should have determined upon the execution of a far more elaborate and extensive work, encouraged by success, and gratified by the expressed approbation of the scientific world, is less to be wondered at than the boldness of his first attempt, the felicitous issue of which he could not have promised himself, whatever might have been his hopes. In the very month of the same year (June, 1832) in which the *Century* was completed, he commenced his *Birds of Europe*. Such a work was a *desideratum*. Nothing like it had been attempted, for his plan was not only to give a clear description of the habits, manners, and locality of every species, with the details of colouring, and the changes of plumage to which so many are subject—in fact a succinct history of each—but to figure every species, male and female, of the size of life, and, where necessary, also the young, and individuals clothed in the plumage of summer and winter, whenever such figures would clear up points of doubt, and conduce to the recognition of the same species under its varied aspects. But though such a work was a *desideratum*, it could not be overlooked that far less expensive works on British birds had been published in our own island, and that some of these—as Bewick's—were graphically illustrated (Mr. Yarrell's admirable work had not then appeared); and it was to be feared that the cost of such a publication, although embracing the *Birds of Europe*, would, taking the foregoing points into consideration, render a remunerative

sale somewhat problematical. Mr. Gould pursued his onerous task with an intensity of purpose which resulted in complete success. *The Birds of Europe* was brought to a close in August, 1837. Notwithstanding the costly nature of such a publication, which necessarily limited its sale to the more wealthy promoters and lovers of ornithological science, and to the great scientific institutions of our own country and the continent, its reception equalled his most sanguine hopes, and its spirited and able author had the happiness to find his labours not unrewarded. It must be borne in mind that at least in some countries the splendid publications of science which have appeared are due to the liberality of Government. Here, on the contrary, we are presented with a magnificent work, unequalled in beauty, fidelity, and completeness, resulting from the enterprise of an ornithologist looking to himself and depending on his unassisted exertions. "Detous les ouvrages de luxe," says M. Temminck.

"Avec planches coloriées d'oiseaux, il n'en est aucun qui puisse rivaliser avec l'immense et brillante entreprise d'une iconographie complète des oiseaux d'Europe dont s'occupe en ce moment M. Gould à Londres. *The Birds of Europe* sont d'un fini si parfait, tant pour le dessin, la pose et l'exacte vérité de l'enluminure, qu'on pourrait, avec de si beaux portraits, se passer des originaux montés; le plus grand nombre des figures sont dessinées sur le vivant; on y voit réunis les deux sexes, souvent le jeune, et toujours les différens états de mue périodique. Le texte est une compilation faite avec critique et discernement."

Mr. Gould's well-merited fame as a scientific ornithologist, in whose hands the pencil mimicked life, was by common consent established, and he might without blame have closed his arduous labours with the close of his *Birds of Europe*; but undeterred by risk, his energetic mind urged him still onward to other and even more formidable attempts. While yet the *Birds of Europe* was in progress of publication, in 1833, he commenced a *Monograph of the Ramphastidae, or Family of Toucans and Aracaris*, a group of birds peculiar to South America, remarkable for the size of their painted beaks and the richness and contrast of the colours which adorn their plumage. This *Monograph* comprised 33 species of this singular race of birds, most of which were new to science, and originally described by Mr. Gould in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*. Within the last few years further accessions of new species have been received, and upon these Mr. Gould is at work, preparing additional plates and descriptive letterpress, by way of an addition to, or completion of, the work. The deep black abruptly cut up by bands or patches of scarlet and yellow, which characterises the plumage of the Toucans, and the olive green tints which prevail in their allies, the Aracaris, are most artistically managed, while the attitudes of the birds themselves are as spirited as truthful. The scientific importance of this *Monograph* is greatly enhanced by a beautiful and delicately executed lithograph rendering manifest the cellular texture of the inside of the large yet light beak, the course of the olfactory nerves, etc., from a dissection by Professor Owen. The long feathery tongue is well displayed,

and also the nerves running through the cellular structure of the upper mandible.

Another work entitled *Monograph of the Trogonidae, or Family of Trogons*, birds of surpassing splendour, was commenced by Mr. Gould in 1835, and finished in 1838. Independently of their extraordinary beauty, these birds are peculiarly interesting to the ornithologist from their geographical distribution. They are respectively distributed between inter-tropical America, some portions of the continent of India, with the islands of the Indian Archipelago, and Africa, one species only being as far as we know, indigenous in the latter continent. Previous to the commencement of Mr. Gould's *Monograph*, 22 species had been described; to this number Mr. Gould added 12 others new to science; and he states in his preface that he has reasons for believing that many others have yet to be discovered, both in the Old and New World, in remoter districts which the civilised man seldom visits. A supplement to his attractive *Monograph* of these birds will be welcomed by the lovers of art and science throughout Europe. Of all the known species the *Trogon resplendens*, clad in golden iridescent green, with long lax flowing plumes, is the most surpassing in brilliancy. Fine specimens are contained in the collection of the British Museum. Mr. Gould's figures of the male and female attest his success in ornithological painting. Before the *Monograph* of the beautiful and interesting family of Trogons (*Trogonidae*) was concluded, two parts of a work termed *A Synopsis of the Birds of Australia* made their appearance. This *Synopsis* in its design is purely scientific; yet it is elegantly illustrated with those essential parts of a bird which fix on the mind generic characteristics, as presented by two, three, or more typical forms. The size of this work adapts it to the ordinary library, and it is one of those publications which the practical ornithologist must possess.

We must not omit to notice that, in the midst of his many labours (1837-8), Mr. Gould prepared the ornithological portion of *The Zoology of the Beagle*, edited by Mr. Charles Darwin. This portion of the work was illustrated by 50 exquisite plates of rare and new birds from Patagonia and other parts of South America, and also from the Galapagos Archipelago. Among these is a new Rhea or South American Ostrich (*Rhea Darwinii*), the habits of which are admirably described by Mr. Darwin in his journal.

At this period, as the *Synopsis* and his papers in the *Zoological Proceedings* prove, Mr. Gould had a grander work in prospect—no less than a great work on the *Birds of Australia*. Yet, while meditating upon it, he gave to the world, in 1837, his *Icones Avium*; and thus, as it were, freed his hands for strenuous and undivided labour. It was in the same year that, taking a glance at what his fellow ornithologists were doing, he issued a prospectus, at the close of which he intimated his intention of visiting Australia; for he felt that although he had access to

the collections of Europe, there was a new world open for exploration. The commencement of the prospectus is as remarkable for personal modesty as for liberality. A short quotation must suffice:—

"The science of ornithology has now become so popular that it has attracted within its influence the talents of many scientific men in all parts of the world, and we find several of these highly gifted individuals engaged in illustrating particular portions of this interesting branch of study. Thus, independently of his work on general science, Mr. Swainson is engaged on the birds of Brazil and Western Africa; Mr. Audubon on the birds of the United States of America; Dr. Ruppell, of Frankfort, on those of Abyssinia; while the deservedly celebrated M. Temminck is occupied upon the Birds of Japan, besides adding yearly to the stores of science by recording new species in his *Planches Coloriees*, and M. Natterer, after a residence of 16 years in the Brazils, has just returned to Vienna with an exceedingly rich collection of the zoological productions of that vast country, the novelties comprised in which will in all probability be immediately known. Thus, while we find the ornithology of almost every other portion of the globe occupying the attention of various talented individuals, that of Australia and its islands, although not forgotten, remains almost unheeded."

To the *Birds of Australia* Mr. Gould now devoted all his energies, and, after putting his plan into a tangible form, set sail in May, 1838, for Australia. During his voyage he found means of sending over to the Zoological Society many valuable observations on the various sea birds, and their latitudinal range respectively, which appeared in the *Proceedings of the Zoological Society*. His notice of the Stormy Petrels (*Thalassidroma*) is more peculiarly interesting, and will be found in Part VII., 1839, page 139. But here Mr. Gould must speak for himself:—

"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 400 miles from the coastline, I despatched my able assistant, Mr. Gilbert, to explore the Western and Northern portions of the country, and returned to England in 1840. I immediately commenced the work *de novo*, and the result of my labours is now before the public."

With respect to Mr. Gilbert, he adds:—

"After spending two years in Northern and Western Australia, Mr. Gilbert returned to England in 1841, bringing with him the result of his labours, which proved of sufficient value and importance to induce me to believe that much 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 as 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. Leichhardt in his overland journey to Port Essington."

During the expedition his party was treacherously attacked by the natives, and he himself fell a victim. The specimens he had collected, together with his notes and memoranda, were afterwards recovered by Mr. Gould.

Thus furnished with an unrivalled collection of subjects, to which every day added fresh stores, and with a rich fund of knowledge, the result of personal experience, Mr. Gould was

prepared for the labour before him. In 1848 the work was brought to a close, but the acquisition of several new species, some of extraordinary beauty, will render it necessary to add several supplementary plates and sheets of descriptive letter-press. Of these we may here notice a new *Menura* (*Menura Albertii*), a new and most gorgeous species of Rifle Bird (*Ptiloris Victoriae*), and a new *Tanyptera*, as being among the most interesting.

An idea of the importance of Mr. Gould's *Birds of Australia* may be gained from the fact that 636 species, in various stages of colouring, are described and figured, and their food, habits, nidification, migration, and extent of geographical range, detailed from his own observation, with the assistance he derived from zealous friends and the natives.

Of these 636 species, about 340 (including those more recently obtained, and of which the figures are now in progress for laying before the world) are either new or were so vaguely known as to render their extrication from a maze of confusion no easy task, and one not to be accomplished without the possession of a *vast series of actual specimens*. When we consider that Dr. Shaw, in his *Zoology of New Holland*, had devoted only a few plates to the subject, from specimens collected by Sir Joseph Banks during the first voyage of Captain Cook, that Lewin's *Birds of New Holland* comprise not more than 26 plates, and that but a few figures and descriptions were given in the earlier voyages of Phillip, White and Collins, and the more recent one of King, we may judge how little aid Mr. Gould could receive from the earlier describers. It is true that more recently the late Mr. Vigors and Dr. Horsfield commenced a memoir on the collection of Australian birds in the Linnæan Society, but they did not proceed far in their labours. To the works of Latham, Cuvier, and Vieillot, as well as to several of the recent voyages of discovery, reference may be made for figures and descriptions of isolated species more or less definite. Still, this is only to glean where the harvest awaits the sickle—only to obtain such a glimpse as proves the necessity of entering personally into the field of exploration. Had not Mr. Gould acted on this conviction, how much relative to the *Zoology of Australia* would remain a sealed-up book—how much that is strange, interesting, and surprising would be unknown!

We cannot here enter into a disquisition on the habits of particular species, or the indulgence of a feeling to body forth a picture of the bower birds, which construct arbours of courtship decorated with shells and the brilliant feathers of parrots, might lead us to follow Mr. Gould's admirable but unadorned narrative till we found ourselves in the realms of poesy. So, also, are we tempted to enter upon the history of the mound makers, or, as we should rather say, constructors of hotbeds for incubation. But, as we have said, we must generalise; for when selection is difficult and space limited, a *resume* must content us. And this *resume* of the birds of Australia is given by Mr. Gould in a

small work which he modestly terms *An Introduction to the Birds of Australia*—in fact, an appendix to his great work, in which he condenses into a small compass a general outline of Australian ornithology, adding to it some details relative to his own journeyings, and an æsthetic survey of nature as presented by forests, flowers, watercourses, droughts, inundations, temperature and climate, interspersed by groupings of birds, insects, and quadrupeds—a picture so simple, and yet so graphic, as to lead us to regret that a full work on the "Impressions of Australia on the Senses" has not issued from the pen of this philosophical ornithologist.

The following passage we quote from the "Introduction":—

"Upon taking a general view of the Australian ornithology, we find no species of vulture, only one typical eagle, and, indeed, a remarkable deficiency in the number of the species of its birds of prey, with the exception of the nocturnal owls, among which the species belonging to the restricted genus *Strix* are more numerous than in any other part of the world—a circumstance which is probably attributable to the great abundance of small quadrupeds, most of which are nocturnal in their habits. Among the perching birds there is a great excess in the *insectivorae*, of the *granivorae*, and of the *psittacidae* (parrot tribe). The latter tribe of birds is more numerous in Australia than in any other part of the world, and forms four great groups, amounting to nearly 60 species. Of the rasorial forms, while the pigeons and hemipodes are numerous, the larger and typical *gallinaceae* are entirely wanting, their only representatives being a few species of *coturnix* and *synoicus* (partridges). The grallatorial birds are about equal in number to those of other countries; and among the water birds the true ducks are but few, while the *procellaridae* (albatrosses, puffins, petrels, etc.) which visit the coast are in much greater abundance than in any other part of the world. On a retrospect of the whole, we find a greater number of nocturnal birds than is comprised in the ornithology of any other section of the globe. I must not omit to mention, too, the extraordinary fecundity which prevails in Australia, many of its smaller birds breeding three or four times in a season, but laying fewer eggs in the early spring, when insect life is less developed, and a greater number later in the season, when the supply of insect food has become more abundant. I have also some reason to believe that the young of many species breed during the first season. . . . Another peculiar feature connected with Australian ornithology is that of its comprising several forms endowed with the power of sustaining and enjoying life without a supply of water—for instance, the *halcyons* (Kingfishers), which I found sustaining life and breeding on the parched plains of the interior during the severe drought of 1838-9, far removed from any water, the food of these birds being insects and lizards."

We may add that there are no woodpeckers in Australia and Polynesia.

Returning from Australia, loaded with specimens, not only of birds, but also of mammalia, struck down by his own gun, Mr. Gould naturally bent his mind to the delineation and description of some of the most important species of the latter. Hence in 1841 he announced his *Monograph of the Kangaroos*; but, on a revision of his collection, he determined to give to the scientific world a history of the *Quadrupeds of Australia*, as a companion to that of the birds. In this work, now in the course of publi-

cation, the animals themselves are not only figured, but portraits of them from life are delineated, of which we cannot but notice one of Landseerian vigour—the physiognomy of the Tasmanian wolf. In the publication of such a work Mr. Gould confesses that he has departed from his original purpose of confining himself solely to ornithology, and owns that, with such profusion of materials at his command, he was tempted to overstep his self-assigned limits. The scientific world ought to be grateful to him for having yielded to a temptation which, contrary to the normal rule, is productive of good.

With the execution of these great works, Mr. Gould's labours have not yet ended. He has just completed a *Monograph of the Odontophorinae, or Partridges of America*—a group of chastely coloured, elegant birds, as attractive to the sportsman of the Far West as are the partridges, pheasants, and grouse to the sportsman of the Old Country.

The completion of one work with Mr. Gould is *not* the period of the commencement of others; he commences a series of new labours the moment he sees his way clear in the midst of his then pressing engagements. At the invitation of the scientific world he has commenced a grand work on the *Birds of Asia*. Is Asia the terminal *terrain* of Mr. Gould's ornithological labours? No. He has already invaded America, and is making an invasion still more formidable. While at work upon the *Birds of Asia* (1850), he is at work also upon the *Humming Birds*, the winged gems of the New World; and were he not to bring out such a *monograph* we should at once condemn him. His collection of humming birds is the finest in Europe; and almost every week he is adding, at no trifling cost, to its perfection. Here, indeed, he is regardless of expense and risk, and can justly claim the patronage of the wealthy and the noble of Europe. The humming birds, divided into many groups or genera, are extremely numerous. Lesson describes about 110 species. The collection of the late Mr. George Loddiges contains about 200 species; that of Mr. Gould upwards of 300, of which many are unique. We may here observe that the bulk of Mr. Gould's collection is mounted, and arranged in revolving cases, in a style befitting the value and overwhelming splendour of their quivering inmates, for the specimens are set upon almost invisible wires, and are tremulous as when during life they hovered over the blossoms of a Mexican wilderness.

But, then, how are the refulgent glories of gems, of metallic gold, green, purple and bronze, to be depicted? Can this triumph of art be achieved? Even so; not indeed by common colouring, but by a peculiar mode attained, after many and most expensive trials, and requiring each figure to be worked up by the hand of the ornithological artist and his able assistant, every plate being in fact an original painting. *Hic labor, hoc opus!* More than adequate repayment of the necessary expenditure Mr. Gould cannot expect—unless, indeed, he receives a full measure of encouragement; and that his noble exertions in such an illustration,

before which every previous attempt falls into the background, should not meet with most liberal support, would be a reflection upon those patrons of ornithological science to whom "les ouvrages de luxe" are welcome as additions of intrinsic value to a noble library. It may be justly observed that these works have already extended a taste for ornithology, not less by their merits in a scientific point of view, than by the truthfulness, beauty, and spirit of illustrations—every plate serving as a first-rate copy for those artistic branches of a family who wish to paint birds as they *should be* painted, and not, as we usually see them in albums, portfolios, and drawing books, vile caricatures of nature. To draw a bird *well* is a task of some difficulty; there are, in fact, not many professed artists who can accomplish this, and herein Mr. Gould's plates may serve as a *study*, or at least afford assistance to those who would wish to do justice by their pencil to these lovely forms of organic being. It is *something* to have extended a taste for ornithology, and a feeling for a pure and artistic style of delineating the varied contour and plumage of the feathered tribes, *more* to have contributed to science.

We think it will be conceded that we have made good our assertion as to the great importance, not in a purely scientific point of view *only*, but as a means of defusing and elevating taste, of Mr. Gould's publications, including those which are still in progress. No one can be blind to the boldness of the scheme in its totality, the consummate style of illustration, the clearness of description, and the splendour of the volumes which have appeared. Nor can we overlook the interest produced by the introduction to the world of so many new species, by the complete illustration of the ornithology of Europe, Asia, and Australasia, and by *monographs* of some of the most attractive groups—Toucans, Trogons, American Partridges, and Humming-birds, to which the attention of the lover of nature can be directed.

Notes on Birds Observed at Ebor and the Nullarbor Plain

By A. S. Le SOUEF, C.M.Z.S., R.A.O.U., State Secretary for New South Wales.

When crossing the great Nullarbor Plain last October, the members of the Union who journeyed to the Perth Conference were interested in seeing a number of Wedge-tailed Eagles, Brown Hawks and Kites flying over the plain, and some speculation was caused as to their food supply, for nothing was visible from the train. On returning early in November, I stayed for two days at Ooldea in order to investigate this question. The preliminary inquiries indicated that numbers of native animals would be found, and that rabbits were also in evidence. In order to get further information, and also some notes on the life history of such animals as were to be found, I spent last July



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