

ENTOMOPHILA PICTA, *Gould.*

Painted Honey-eater.

Entomophila picta, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 154.

THIS beautiful little Honey-eater is strictly peculiar to the interior of New South Wales, where it inhabits the myalls (*Acacia pendula*), and other trees bordering the extensive plains of that part of Australia. On a comparison of skins of this species with those of the other *Meliphagidæ*, prior to my visit to the country, I had been led to suspect that the actions and economy of the Painted Honey-eater would be found to differ materially from those of the other members of its family, and such proved to be the case, for it is much more active among the branches, captures insects on the wing, and darts forth and returns to the same spot much after the manner of the Flycatchers. Its song is a loud but not very harmonious strain, which is frequently uttered when on the wing. I have generally met with it in pairs, flying and chasing each other from top to top of the most lofty trees. During flight they repeatedly spread their tails, when the white portion of the feathers shows very conspicuously; the yellow colouring of the wing also contributes to the beauty of their appearance, which somewhat resembles that of the Goldfinch. I found the nest of this bird with two nearly fledged young on the fifth of September; the nest was the frailest structure possible, round, of small size, most ingeniously suspended by the rim to the thick drooping leaves of the *Acacia pendula*, and entirely composed of very fine fibrous roots. The female is much less brilliant than the male, but does not differ in the distribution of the markings.

I have never seen this bird from any other part of Australia than that above mentioned, nor in any other collection than my own.

Head, cheeks, and all the upper surface black, the posterior edges of the ear-coverts tipped with white; wings black, the outer edges of the primaries and secondaries rich yellow at their base, forming a conspicuous broad mark on the wing; tail black, margined externally with rich yellow, each feather except the two centre ones more or less largely tipped on the internal web with white; throat and all the under surface white, the flanks having a few longitudinal faint spots of brown; bill soft and pulpy, and of a deep pink red; irides hazel; eyelash darker hazel; feet purplish lead-colour.

The figures represent the two sexes and the nest of the natural size.