

## THRESKIORNIS STRICTIPENNIS.

### White Ibis.

*Ibis strictipennis*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 106.

*Yam-bull-bull*, Aborigines of Port Essington.

*Black-necked Ibis*, Colonists of Port Essington.

*White Ibis* of the Colonists of New South Wales.

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THE same cause that induced the Straw-necked Ibis (*Geronticus spinicollis*) to visit New South Wales in such abundance during the year 1839 acted equally on the present bird, which was not only observed at the same period, but the two species were frequently seen in company; one marked difference, however, was noticed, namely, that while the *Geronticus spinicollis* visited equally the lagoons and the plains, the *Threskiornis strictipennis* confined itself solely to the wet hollows of flats, the banks of rivers, lagoons, &c., wading knee-deep among the rushes and green herbage in search of frogs, newts and insects, upon which it feeds; when satiated it mounted upon the bare branches of the large gum-trees bordering the feeding-place, and then became so watchful that it could not be approached within gun-shot without the utmost caution. The natives as well as the colonists assured me that it was seldom so abundant as at the period of my visit, and I believe that many seasons sometimes elapse without its appearing there at all. I encountered this bird either in pairs or in small flocks of from five to twenty in number, but it was never a hundredth part so plentiful as the *Geronticus spinicollis*. Like that bird it must retire to some unknown part of Australia, doubtless towards the interior, a single skin from the north coast being all that I have ever seen from any other part of the country.

The *Threskiornis strictipennis* may at all times be distinguished from its near ally *T. Æthiopica*, inhabiting the banks of the Nile, as well as from the *T. melanocephala*, by the lengthened plumes which hang down from the front of the neck, and from which its specific appellation has been taken.

Dissection is necessary to distinguish the sexes, as they vary little, if at all, in size or colouring.

Head and upper half of the neck bare, and with the bill of a deep slaty black; back of the head and neck crossed by ten narrow distinct bands of rose-pink, and on the crown of the head a series of oval spots, arranged in the form of a star, of the same colour; the whole of the body and wings white, tinged with buff; the feathers on the fore-part of the neck long, narrow, lanceolate and stiff; primaries tipped with deep bluish green; webs of the tertiaries extremely prolonged and recurved, and of a deep blue-black mingled with white; thighs and knees deep purple; tarsi and feet light purple; irides dark brown.

The Plate represents two birds rather less than two-thirds of the natural size.