PTILOTIS CHRYSOTIS.

Yellow-eared Honey-eater.

Certhia chrysotis, Lath. Ind. Orn., Supp., p. xxxviii. No. 16.
Yellow-eared Honey-eater, Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 195. No. 54.
Meliphaga chrysotis, Lewin, Birds of New Holl., pl. v.—Vig. and Horsf. in Linn. Trans., vol. xv. p. 314.—Gould in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.
Spot-eared Creeper, Shaw, Zool., vol. viii. p. 244.

The Yellow-eared Honey eater is very common in New South Wales, where it inhabits the thick brushes near the sea, breeding and dwelling therein all the year round. I found it especially abundant in all parts of the river Hunter, as well as in the cedar brushes of the Liverpool and other ranges of hills. No examples of this bird came under my notice in South Australia, and I do not believe that it extends so far to the westward; neither does it occur at Port Essington, in which district a different character of country and of vegetation prevails. Mr. Bynoe procured a single specimen on the north coast, but did not note the precise locality. In its habits and disposition it assimilates very closely to the *Ptilotis flavigula* of Van Diemen's Land. It prefers low shrubby trees to those of a larger growth, frequently descending to the ground among the underwood in search of insects. No one species of the genus is more bold and fearless of man; I have often been permitted to approach within a few yards of it while threading the dense brushes without causing it the least alarm. Like the rest of its genus, this species feeds on insects, the pollen of flowers, and occasionally fruits and berries. The flowering creeper upon which the bird is figured (together with many similar plants), growing in the utmost luxuriance on the sides of rivers, and attracting a corresponding amount of insect life, is often visited by the *Ptilotis chrysotis*, which may be observed busily engaged in search of its prey, heedless of the proximity of a human intruder in its sequestered haunts. It is not celebrated for the richness or liquidity of its notes or for the volubility of its song, but its presence, when not visible among the foliage, is always to be detected by its loud ringing whistling note, which is continually poured forth during the months of spring and summer.

The sexes are alike in colour, but the female presents the same disparity of size that is observable between the sexes of the other species of the genus; the young at an early age assume the plumage of the adults, but the colour is not so rich or decided.

I found a nest of this species in a gully under the Liverpool range; it was placed in the thickest part of one of the creeping plants which overhung a small pool of water; like that of the rest of the genus, it was cup-shaped in form, suspended by the brim, and very neatly made of sticks and lined with very fine twigs; the eggs are two in number, of a pearly white spotted with purplish brown, the spots forming a zone at the large end; they are eleven and a half lines long by eight lines broad.

Upper surface olive-green; under surface the same colour but paler; behind the ears an oval spot of fine yellow; region of the eyes blackish; below the eye a narrow stripe of yellow; bill black at the tip, yellow at the base; legs purplish flesh-colour; irides dark lead-colour; gape white.

The Plate represents a male and a female of the natural size.