MELIPHAGA SERICEA, *Gould.*

White-cheeked Honey-eater.

New Holland Creeper, female, White's Voy., pl. in p. 297.
L'Heorotaire noir, Vieill. Ois. dor., tom. ii. p. 106. pl. 71.
Meliphaga sericea, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part IV. p. 144; and in Syn. Birds of Australia, Part I.
Meliphaga sericeola, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part V. p. 152, female.

The White-cheeked Honey-eater is an inhabitant of New South Wales, and certainly proceeds as far to the eastward as Moreton Bay; but the birds inhabiting the country to the northward of this are so entirely unknown, that it is impossible to say how far its range may extend in that direction. It has not yet been discovered in Van Diemen's Land or South Australia. It differs materially in its habits and disposition from the *Meliphaga Novæ-Hollandiæ*, being less exclusively confined to the brushes, and affecting localities of a more open character. I observed it to be tolerably abundant in the Illawarra district, particularly among the shrubs surrounding the open glades of the luxuriant brushes; it is also common at Botany Bay, and on most parts of the sea-coast between that place and the river Clarence; but I never met with it during any of my excursions into the interior of the country.

I found it, unlike its near ally, a remarkably shy species; so much so, that I frequently had much difficulty in getting within gun-shot of it. When perched on the trees it is a most showy bird, its white cheek-feathers and contrasted tints of colouring rendering it very conspicuous.

I did not succeed in finding its nest, a circumstance I much regret; for although it is probable that in the colour of its eggs and its mode of nidification it generally resembles the *M. Novæ-Hollandiæ*, there will doubtless be found as great a specific difference in these respects as is to be observed in the markings of their plumage.

The sexes are alike in colour, but the female is somewhat the smaller. The white cheeks and the absence of white tips to the tail-feathers will at all times distinguish it from the *M. Novæ-Hollandiæ*.

Crown of the head, throat, and space round the eye black; an obscure band of white crosses the forehead and passes over each eye; a beautiful plume of hair-like white feathers spreads over the cheeks and ear-coverts; back dusky brown, striped longitudinally with black; under surface white, each feather having a central longitudinal mark of black; wings dark brown, the outer edge of all the primaries and secondaries wax-yellow; tail dark brown, the external edges margined with yellow; irides dark brown; feet and bill black.

The figures represent two males of the natural size, on a plant growing in the district of Illawarra, called Christmas by the settlers.