

MICRÆCA FLAVIGASTER, *Gould.*

Yellow-bellied Micræca.

Micræca flavigaster, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., Part X. p. 132.

Brown Flycatcher, Residents at Port Essington.

THIS little Flycatcher, which is a native of the northern portions of Australia, is met with in the neighbourhood of Port Essington in every variety of situation, and is particularly abundant on all the islands in Van Diemen's Gulf. "Its habits and manners," says Mr. Gilbert, "assimilate more nearly to those of the *Petroicæ* than to those of any other group. It gives utterance to many different notes, pouring forth at the dawn of day a strain much resembling that of some of the *Petroicæ*, and like them remaining stationary for a long time while giving utterance to its very pretty and agreeable melody. In the middle of the day, when the sun is nearly vertical, it leaves the trees and soars upward in regular circles, like the Skylark, until it arrives at so great a height as to be scarcely perceptible; it then descends perpendicularly until it nearly reaches the trees, when it closes its wings and apparently falls upon the branch on which it alights. During the whole of this movement it pours forth a song, some parts of which are very soft and melodious, but quite different from that of the morning; in the evening its song is again varied, and then so much resembles the unconnected notes of the *Gerygones*, that I have frequently been misled by it. The *Micræca flavigaster* is a very familiar species, inhabiting the trees and bushes close around the houses, and is little alarmed or disturbed at the approach of man. At times it is extremely pugnacious; I have seen a pair attack a crow and beat it until it was obliged to seek safety by flight, all the while calling out most lustily. Notwithstanding it is so abundant everywhere, and it must have been breeding during my stay here, as is proved by my killing young birds apparently only a few days old, I did not succeed in finding the nest; and on inquiring of the natives, they could give me no information whatever respecting it or the period of incubation."

The sexes do not differ in colour or size.

The stomach is tolerably muscular, and the food consists of insects of various kinds.

All the upper surface brownish olive; wings and tail brown, margined with paler brown; throat white; all the under surface yellow; irides blackish brown; feet blackish grey.

The figures are of the natural size.