

Woodpeckers, a group of birds found in all parts of the world with the exception of Australia and Polynesia.

Such then is a transient view of a few of the great physical features of Australia to which I have thought it requisite to allude in the Introduction of the present work, and I cannot conclude this portion of the subject without mentioning the very remarkable manner in which many of the Australian Birds represent other nearly allied species belonging to the Old World, as if some particular law existed in reference to the subject, the species so represented being evidently destined to fulfil the same offices in either hemisphere. As instances in point, I may mention among the FALCONIDÆ the *F. hypoleucus* and *F. melanogenys*, which represent the *F. Islandicus* and *F. Peregrinus*; our Merlin and Kestrel are equally well represented by the *Falco frontatus* and *Tinnunculus Cenchroïdes* of Australia; the Osprey of Europe also is represented by the *P. leucocephala*; among the wading birds, the Curlew and the Whimbrel of Europe are beautifully represented by the *Numenius Australis* and *N. uropygialis*, and the bar-tailed and black-tailed Godwits by the *Limosa uropygialis* and *L. Melanuröides*. Both Europe and Australia have each one Stilted Plover, one Dottrell (*Eudromias*), and one Avocet. Among the water birds the Cormorants and Grebes of Europe are similarly represented by the *Phalacrocorax Carboïdes*, &c., and *Podiceps Australis*, *P. Nestor* and *P. gularis*; and other instances might be noticed, but as they will all be found in the body of the work, it will not be necessary to recapitulate them here. Although so many curious instances of representation and of nearly allied species are found to occur, no country possesses so many genera peculiar to itself as Australia, such as *Ægotheles*, *Falcunculus*, *Colluricincla*, *Grallina*, *Gymnorhina*, *Strepera*, *Cinclosoma*, *Menura*, *Psophodes*, *Malurus*, *Sericornis*, *Ephthianura*, *Pardalotus*, *Chlamydera*, *Ptilonorhynchus*, *Struthidea*, *Licmetis*, *Calyptorhynchus*, *Platyercus*, *Euphema*, *Nymphicus*, *Climacteris*, *Scythrops*, *Myzantha*, *Talegalla*, *Leipoa*, *Pedionomus*, *Cladorhynchus*, *Tribonyx*, *Cereopsis*, *Anseranas*, and *Biziura*.

In a country of such vast extent as Australia, spreading over so many degrees of latitude, we might naturally expect to find much diversity in the climate, and such is really the case. Van Diemen's Land, from its isolated and more southern position, is cooler and characterized by greater humidity than Australia; its vegetation is therefore abundant, and its forests dense and difficult of access. The climate of the continent, on the other hand, between the 25th and 35th degrees of latitude, is much drier, and has a temperature which is probably higher than that of any other part of the world; the thermometer frequently rising to 110°, 120°, and even 130° in the shade; and this high temperature is not unfrequently increased by the hot winds which sweep over the country from the northward, and which indicate most strongly the parched and sterile nature of the interior. Unlike other hot countries, this great heat and dryness is unaccompanied by night dews, and the falls of rain being uncertain and irregular, droughts of many months' duration sometimes occur, during which the rivers and lagoons are dried up, the land becomes a parched waste, vegetation is burnt up, and famine spreads destruction on every side. It is easier for the imagination to conceive than the pen to depict the horrors of so dreadful a visitation. The indigenous animals and birds retire to the mountains, or to more distant regions exempt from its influence. Thousands of sheep and oxen perish, bullocks are seen dead by the road-side or in the dried-up water-holes, to which, in the hope of relief, they had dragged themselves, there to fall and die; trees are cut down for the sake of the twigs as fodder; the flocks are driven to the mountains in the hope that water may there be found, and every effort is made to avert the impending ruin; but in spite of all that can be done the loss is extreme. At