

I have become very familiar with the Gould specimens during my long association with them, and although I have never been in Australia and probably never shall be able to make the trip, I feel that, thanks to this famous collection, I am more familiar with the birds of Australia than with those of most foreign countries.

It has been my pleasure to show the collection to Mr. Gregory Mathews on his visit to Philadelphia some years ago and in co-operation with him I have prepared a list of the types which was published in the *Austral Avian Record*, vol. I, nos. 6 and 7.

I have also been pleased to compare specimens sent by Australian ornithologists with the types in order to determine which sub-species the latter represented in the fine-drawn distinctions of to-day.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In a covering letter, Dr. Witmer Stone writes: "In Sharpe's '*Index*' to Gould's works, our former president is referred to as 'John' Wilson. The name is Thomas B. Wilson as I have given it.

"It may interest you to know that Gould saw his first live Humming-bird here in Philadelphia when visiting America, on May 21, 1857, in company with a resident ornithologist, William L. Bailey, whose nephew (of the same name) has published an account of him with extracts from letters of Gould. They had engaged in correspondence regarding the methods employed by each in producing the iridescent appearance of Humming-bird plumage (see *Introduction to the Trochilidae*, vol. I, p. vii)."

The "Gilbert Country" in Western Australia

By C. PRICE CONIGRAVE, Sydney, N.S.W.

No Gould Centenary would be complete without ample tribute being paid to the great work done by Gould's friend and collector, John Gilbert. I appreciate, therefore, the invitation of the Editor of *The Emu* to pen a few lines with regard to Gilbert's work in Western Australia, where, as his field notes indicate, he did so much valuable work in the cause of ornithology and other branches of science.

It was my happy lot in years gone by to tread many of the bush haunts where nearly a century ago Gilbert did so much to elucidate the secrets of Australian avifauna. The details of the remarkable association between Gould and Gilbert are so well-known that there is little need for me to repeat them. To me, personally, however, one of the most enduring memories is wrapped about the Wongan Hills, that queer little range of ironstone hills—only a mere eight miles in length and at no point more than 1,200 feet above sea-level—that, at a point about 100 miles to the north-east of Perth, rise above the surrounding sand plains. And why? Because it was there that 35 years ago some

of us followed Gilbert's footsteps, camped in the very gorges where he had camped 60 years earlier, and filled our billies at the same spring that had provided the great collector with camp water.

Earlier numbers of *The Emu* (vol. III, p. 217, vol. IV, p. 2) give the details of our visit to the Wongan country. Suffice it to remind my readers now that the leader of the party was the late Alexander W. Milligan, who in his day did a great deal for the cause that we all have so much at heart. Milligan has left on record the fact that it was a desire that we might check up on the Wongans, after the many years that had elapsed since Gilbert's visit there, that led our steps thither. More than once I remember dear old Milligan saying, "Well, here we are, my boy, just where Gilbert was 60 years ago." Can you imagine how that reminder added a zest to one's field work?

The Wongan Hills area must always be of moment in regard to Gilbert's work because it was there, as will be recalled, that he first discovered the nesting-mounds of the Mallee-Fowl (*Leipoa ocellata*). Gould's references to that important event indicate how great was his pleasure at his collector's discoveries. It is good to think again of Gilbert with his blackfellow guide when the first mound was seen, and how the native expressed his fears in no uncertain way that Gilbert, in his enthusiastic anxiety, might injure the eggs in the mound in attempting hurriedly to get at them. We remember how the white man was imperiously waved out of the way by the blackfellow, who proceeded to show him "just how." For many years past the Gnou, as the Mallee Fowl is called in Western Australia, has deserted the Wongan Hills area. We saw scores of old mounds there during our visit, but the birds, even long before then, had permanently left the district. We thought that bush fires had been the cause of their disappearance, but were convinced later on that prolonged droughts had been the trouble.

Then the Black-throated Whiplbird! If you have ever been in the field after that very elusive creature you will readily appreciate Gould's quotation of Gilbert's note that, "It utters a song which it is quite impossible to describe, and which is so different from that of every other bird I ever heard or am acquainted with, that I shall have no difficulty in recognizing it again wherever I may hear it. I heard it for the first time, together with the notes of many other birds equally strange to me, in the vicinity of the Wongan Hills."

These same hills have an interesting connection with *Malurus*, for it was there that *Malurus pulcherrimus* had its scientific birthplace, and because Milligan and I "re-discovered" it in the Stirling Range country, in the far

south of Western Australia, 60 years after Gilbert had secured the type in the Wongans, that particular species will for me, at least, always have special associations.

In Gilbert's day, of course, the Wongan Hills were completely off the beaten track, and natives then had their tribal runs round about them. But that is all changed nowadays. The contiguous sand plains are now part of the wheat belt, and thriving towns, with "talkies" on every night at the local theatre, have taken the place of the empty scrub lands where Gilbert, with his gun and collecting gear, wandered in days gone by. Fortunately, however, the Wongan Hills, owing to their very rugged character, can never be of economic value, and therefore will always remain in themselves a natural sanctuary for the creatures of the wild.

There is practically no locality mentioned by Gilbert in his Western Australian field notes that I do not know personally, be it down in the great karri forest belt in the far south, in the dense scrub lands north and south of Perth, along the pretty reaches of the Vasse River or scores of other places. It was in the karri forest, of course, that Gilbert obtained his great "find"—the Noisy Scrub-bird (*Atrichornis clamosa*), of which Gould wrote: "Few of the novelties received from Australia more interested me than the species to which I gave the generic name of *Atrichia*."

Gilbert covered an immense area of country in the course of his investigations in Western Australia, and his careful notes regarding every object that he collected must always be of inestimable value to ornithology, to say nothing of other branches of scientific work. Of the man himself I can speak of one interesting link over the years. In 1898 I spoke in Perth with an old man who, as a youth, remembered Gilbert staying at his father's homestead in the Toodyay district, through which, by the way, Gilbert went to the Wongan Hills country. The kindly nature and courtesy of Gilbert towards him as a lad had been, I was told, a pleasant and abiding recollection through the passing of many years.

Gouldiana

By K. A. HINDWOOD, Willoughby, N.S.W.

The following itemized list refers to the miscellaneous manuscript Gouldian material recently obtained by Mr. A. H. Chisholm in England from descendants of John Gould.

Item 1, 1838.

Drafts of two letters, 11 pp. f'cap, in Gould's handwriting, written on his voyage to Australia. One is undated