

## ON TWO EARLY AUSTRALIAN ORNITHOLOGISTS.

By ALFRED J. NORTH, C.M.Z.S., Ornithologist.

(Plate xxvii.).

### JOHN WILLIAM LEWIN.

John William Lewin was the author of the first work published on Australian Birds. He arrived in New South Wales in 1798 by H.M.S. "Buffalo," and is thus referred to by the Duke of Portland in a communication to Governor Hunter, under date 6th February, 1798. "Mr. Lewin is a painter and drawer in natural history, and being desirous of pursuing his studies in a country which cannot fail to improve that branch of knowledge, you will allow him the usual Government rations during his residence in the settlement."<sup>1</sup> In 1801 Lewin accompanied Lieutenant-Colonel Paterson, the Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony, and others in an exploring expedition up the Hunter and Paterson Rivers, the latter previous to the visit being known as Cedar Arm Surgeon Harris, writing from the Hunter River on 25th June 1801, to Governor King remarks: "The Colonel says he has found several new plants here, and Mr. Lewin also says he has met with new birds. If so, they are above my comprehension, as I see nothing new about them, one hawk excepted, and that only in colour being red with a white head."<sup>2</sup>

In the same vessel which conveyed most of the party during these explorations, the "Lady Nelson," a brig of six guns, Lieutenant Murray, R.N., in February of the following year, discovered and entered Port Phillip.

Probably Lewin obtained the specimens from which his descriptions and figures of the "Scarlet-back Warbler" were taken, during his exploration of these rivers, for in the 1822 edition of his work it is stated that this species "inhabits forests near the banks of Patterson's River." Dr. R. B. Sharpe refers this figure to the Northern and North-western Australian species *Malurus cruentatus*, Gould, but it is unquestionably applicable to the New

---

<sup>1</sup> Bladen—Hist. Rec. N. S. Wales, iii., 1895, p. 358.

<sup>2</sup> Bladen—*Loc. cit.*, p. 417.