

OREONYMPHA NOBILIS, Gould.

Bearded Mountaineer.

Oreonympha nobilis, Gould, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1869, p. 295.—Selater & Salvin, *tom. cit.* p. 600.
—Whitely, Proc. Zool. Soc. 1874, p. 676.—Mulsant & Verr. Hist. Nat. Ois.-
Mouches, iii. p. 139.—Elliot, Synopsis of the Trochilidæ, p. 157.

Nobody who has examined a specimen of this Humming-bird has hesitated to designate it as one of the most striking of the whole family; and as for myself, I look upon it as one of the finest species of Humming-bird that I ever described. Its large size and the great development of the feathers of its crown and beard render it a remarkable bird to look at; and the admirable way in which the original skins were prepared justify the large price of twenty pounds which I had to pay for my first specimen.

After recording the capture of the species, I at once requested Mr. Whitely to write to his son in Peru urging him to endeavour to procure the female, and also to send some notes on the species itself. The result was that the hen bird was soon afterwards forwarded by Mr. Henry Whitely, together with a note on the habits of the Bearded Mountaineer. "The first specimen," he says, "I obtained of this bird was at Tinta; but I have since found it in the province of Cuzco, and also on the highroad between Tinta and Cuzco. How strange it seems, after so many years have passed since the discovery of Peru, and so many distinguished people have travelled over the same road, that they have never made mention nor obtained a specimen of this beautiful bird!

"Its flight is very peculiar. It takes a flight from one flower in the direction of another, perhaps some two or three hundred yards off, and all of a sudden comes to a dead stop, throws the body up vertically, the tail being spread out, and the beautiful crown and beard glittering in the sunshine. This action is frequently repeated in the passage from one flowering shrub to another, evidently for the purpose of taking insects in the air.

"This is one of the few Humming-birds where colour is seen to great advantage. In most of the species it is never seen till the bird is shot; this is especially observable in *Aglaeactis castelnaudi*, where male and female are adorned with a tuft of white feathers on the breast, and it is impossible to distinguish male from female in the living state."

The following is the original description which I gave of this beautiful bird:—

"Bill and legs black; crown blue, with a streak of black down the centre; on the throat a lengthened streak of brilliant feathers, of which those nearest the bill are green, those which succeed are reddish purple, the whole being bordered on each side with black; sides of the neck and chest greyish white; abdomen, flanks, and under tail-coverts mottled white, grey, and light brown; back of the neck and upper surface bronzy brown; wings purplish brown; outer tail-feather on each side white, with a longitudinal streak of bronzy brown at the tip of the inner web; the next on each side the same, but the bronzy mark of greater extent; the centre feathers entirely bronze as in *Oxygogon*. Total length 6 inches, bill $1\frac{1}{2}$, wing $3\frac{1}{4}$, tail 3, tarse $\frac{1}{4}$."

The Plate represents two old males and a female, drawn from specimens in my own possession. These were procured by Mr. Henry Whitely at a height of 11,500 feet above the level of the sea.

Notwithstanding the long and stout bill, I consider this form to be allied to *Oxygogon* and *Rhamphomicon*; all three forms have the gular ornament, as well as a laxity of plumage and very flexible tail-feathers.

I consider my Plate is improved by the introduction of one of the shrubs of the Andes (*Chuquiraga insignis*), sent home by my departed friend Jameson. This sprig was hung up in the shade and not put under pressure.

Sizes of female and young male, with their colours, are now given:—

Female. Crown of head brown, covered with very fine feathers, speckled with dull green; throat brown,