

DORICHA BRYANTÆ, *Lawr.*

Bryant's Wood-Star.

Doricha bryantæ, *Lawr.* Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. N. Y. 1867, vol. viii. p. 48.—Muls. Hist. Nat. Ois.-Mouch. tom. iv. p. 42 (1877).—Boucard, P. Z. S. 1878, p. 70.—Elliot, Synopsis, 1879, p. 125.

A LITTLE group of Humming-birds is now restricted to three species, under the generic name of *Doricha*; one of these has been described for 30 years, and was made known to the public by the drawing published in the 'Monograph' in the year 1860. I trust that my new Plates will be as acceptable to the many lovers of these flying gems who have sprung up since that time, and seem to show quite as much zeal for the first sight of these novelties which are yearly brought before us. As I know but little about the habits and economy of these new discoveries, I am not likely to interest my readers if I appeal to them through the letterpress only; but I have always been more successful in conveying the form by a good drawing. How difficult would it be to describe the shape of this bird's tail, which a faithful drawing can produce in a moment!

The most ornamental of this little group is the *D. lyrura*; and this species I had the pleasure of describing. The other, *D. bryantæ*, was described by Mr. Lawrence, of New York, who called it *bryantæ* after the wife of Dr. Bryant, who, I regret, is no more. Mr. Lawrence states that the present bird is a native of Costa Rica, and it was met with in that country by Mr. Boucard—at San José in March, and on the volcano of Irazu in April. Every group has some peculiarity to separate it; and in the case of the three *Dorichæ* we ought, I think, to regard the differences as only specific. *D. lyrura* has a most singular tail, which is a source of great beauty to the bird; if the tail be closed, the outer feathers being the longest, a lyre-like form is produced—whilst in the tail of the present bird the second feather is lengthened, the first and third being of the same length and straight. The colouring of the crown is very plain; and the luminous colour of the throat is flat and seems to want variety. A glance at the drawing will show these points more satisfactorily.

"Of this beautiful genus," says Mr. Lawrence, "three other species only were previously known, found severally in the Bahamas, Eastern Mexico, and Guatemala. The one now described is most like *D. evelynæ* from the Bahamas in the form of its bill and tail-feathers; but the former is rather longer and the latter much narrower in the new species; it differs in the duller and darker green of the upper plumage, in the throat being uniform in colour, not changeable, and with no approach to violet or purple; there is less rufous below; and the margins of the tail-feathers are pale and occupy half the web, while in *evelynæ* the entire inner webs of the tail-feathers are bright cinnamon."

"I have named this fine species in compliment to Mrs. Bryant, the widow of my friend, the late Dr. Henry Bryant, of Boston. In the Proceedings of the Soc. of Nat. Hist. for 1857, Dr. Bryant gave an interesting account of *D. evelynæ*, a beautiful ally of the above species, several specimens of which he obtained at the Bahamas in that year; Mr. Gould states that these were the first procured since the discovery of the type thirty years previously. Mr. Boucard states that *D. bryantæ* is very rare in Costa Rica. It appears so soon as it is daylight, and is very quick. It never rests long in one place; when on the wing it makes a great noise, similar to that of a large Coleopteron (Scarabeidæ) when flying."

Description. Male—entire upper plumage of a rather dull grass-green; tail brownish black, tinged with purple, the feathers (except the central ones) having their inner webs broadly margined with dull pale rufous; chin and throat bright crimson, below which is a broad belt of greyish white; breast and sides dull green, intermixed with ashy; lower part of abdomen bright rufous, thighs brown, crissum light rufous, the feathers with dull green centres; wings dark brownish purple; bill black; "iris dark brown;" feet dark brown.

The colouring of the female is given by Mr. Elliot:—"Above dull dark green, sides of the neck and upper parts of flanks dark green, throat and breast pale buff, abdomen and crissum rufous; middle tail-feathers dark green, next rufous at base with the terminal pale purplish black band across the central portion."

Total length $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches, wing $1\frac{3}{8}$, tail 1, culmen $\frac{1}{8}$.