

HELIOMASTER MESOLEUCUS.

Stripe-breasted Star-throat.

Trochilus mesoleucus, Temm. Pl. Col. 317.

——— *longirostris*, Natt. (Bonap.).

——— *squamosus*, Temm. Pl. Col. 203. fig. 1.

——— *mystacinus*, Vieill. Ois. dor., tom. iii. ined. pls. 21 male, 22 female, 23 young.

Ornismya Temminckii, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois. Mou., p. 88. pl. 20.

——— *mesoleuca*, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois. Mou., p. 110. pls. 29, 30.—Ib. Traité d'Orn., p. 278.

Mellisuga mesoleuca, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 246.

——— *squamosa*, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 245.

——— *melanoleuca*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 112, *Mellisuga*, sp. 5.

Heliomaster mesoleucus, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 70, *Heliomaster*, sp. 3.

WHILE *H. longirostris* inhabits the north-eastern shores of South America, and *H. Angelæ* the southern, the present species dwells in the intermediate country, its more favourite localities appearing to be the interior districts rather than those near the coast; for although it is rarely found in the immediate vicinity of Rio de Janeiro, it is tolerably numerous in the rich provinces of Minas Geraes, and from thence extends to the latitudes of Bahia and Pernambuco. Mr. Reeves, who has afforded me much information respecting many species of this family, simply says, in reference to the present bird, that it "inhabits Minas Geraes and Bahia, but is rare in Rio:" to this gentleman, however, I am indebted for a nest of this species, which is remarkable for the situation in which it is deposited,—the middle of a lengthened, pendent, rope-like mass of lichen, probably a species of *Usnea*; the nest itself being constructed of some glossy vegetable material, apparently the scales from the receptacle of one of the *Compositæ*, decorated on the outside with small flakes of a pale buffy coloured bark, and lined within with a substance, which would seem to be the white silky hairs which crown the seeds of some species of *Asclepiadææ*.

The material of which the nest is composed varies, apparently in accordance with the materials at hand, but it appears to be always attached to some pendent object, a mass of lichens, a leaf, &c., as in an account published by the Vicomte de Tarragon in the "Revue Zoologique" for 1844, of a nest in his possession, he states that it is "attached vertically, by means of some viscid substance, to a large leaf of a plant unknown to me, but which in its shape and size exactly resembles a leaf of *Catalpa*. It is composed entirely of cotton, without a particle of any other material."

Head luminous grass-green; throat-frill luminous purplish crimson; upper surface and wing-coverts bronzy green; two centre tail-feathers deep green, glossed with bronze, remainder of the tail-feathers purplish black; beneath the eye a line of white; under surface very dark green, with an irregular line of white down the centre, and a tuft of white feathers on the sides between the flanks and back; under tail-coverts blackish green, margined and tipped with white; bill black; feet dark brown.

The young are very similar in colour, but the green of the head is much less brilliant, and the throat-feathers are black bordered with white, giving that part a scaly appearance, whence M. Temminck's name of *squamatus*.

The female has the whole of the upper surface bronzy green; the tail-feathers greenish bronze at the base passing into black, the three outer feathers on each side tipped with white, the white being conspicuous on the outer one, less so on the next, and still less on the third; throat-feathers dark olive, margined with white; under surface bronzy green, with a mesial stripe of white.

The figures represent the two sexes of the natural size.