

HELIOMASTER CONSTANTI.

Constant's Star-throat.

Trochilus Constantii, De Latt. Echo du Monde Savante, Juin 1843.

I HAVE for a long time had examples of this bird in my collection with the name of *Constanti* attached thereto, but I have not as yet been able to find a description of it in any work; the "Echo du Monde Savante," in which it is said to be described, being merely a kind of newspaper or journal of the day, and consequently seldom cared for after perusal, is now so rare as to be unprocurable. I must therefore content myself with concluding that the name has been rightly applied.

I have received numerous examples direct from Guatemala, which I can affirm to be its true habitat; I have never seen it from the more southern countries of Veragua and Costa Rica, or the comparatively northern ones of Mexico proper; I have but little doubt that it inhabits the temperate and sterile regions of that country, especially those that are favourable to the growth of pines and various species of oak. Its brilliant scarlet throat will at all times serve to distinguish this from the other members of the genus.

The sexes present the usual difference of size, the female being smaller than her mate; in their colouring they are very similar, but the extent of the red on the throat is much less, and occupies the lower portion only in the female; and in some individuals of this sex is almost obsolete.

The tufts of white feathers on the sides, the irregular line of the same hue down the centre of the band, and the white line descending from the gape, are conspicuous features in this species.

Head, the upper surface, wing- and tail-coverts bronzy green, deepening into a sooty hue on the forehead; wings dull purplish brown; two centre tail-feathers bronzy green, the remainder bronzy green at the base, passing into black towards the tip, the extent of the green decreasing and of the black increasing as the feathers recede from the centre; each with a spot of white at the tip, that on the outer one occupying both webs, but not reaching quite to the tip of the outer web; the white spot on the others at the extremity of the inner web and gradually decreasing in size; spot behind the eye, streak down the cheeks, tuft on each side, and a line down the rump, white; chin black; throat rich deep luminous metallic red; under surface grey, washed with bronzy green on the flanks; under tail-coverts olive-brown, margined with white; bill black; feet dark brown.

The figures are of the natural size.