

HELIANTHEA BONAPARTEI.

Bonaparte's Star-frontlet.

Ornismia Bonapartei, Boiss. Rev. Zool. 1840, p. 6.—Bourc. Ann. Sci. Phys. &c. de Lyon, tom. v. p. 307, pl. xiv.

Trochilus aurigaster, Lodd.

Mellisuga Bonapartei, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 112, *Mellisuga*, sp. 8.

Helianthea bonapartii, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 74, *Helianthea*, sp. 2.

———— *Bonaparti*, Bonap. Consp. Troch. in Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 251.

ALTHOUGH inhabiting the same country, this beautiful Humming-Bird has not been so long known to European ornithologists as the *Helianthea typica*, the first description of it having appeared so recently as 1840.

In dedicating this species to Prince Charles Lucien Bonaparte, M. Boissoneau states that he desires to do honour to one of the most learned ornithologists of our time; and never certainly was a compliment of this kind more appropriately bestowed, since no one has done more, and few so much, to advance this department of science than that accomplished and amiable man.

The remarks I have made respecting the destruction of the *Helianthea typica* by the Indian hunters, apply with greater force to the present species, which, owing to its greater beauty, is even more diligently sought after; being, however, a far less numerous species, a much smaller number are collected. Bogota is the locality whence the greater number of the specimens sent to London and Paris are despatched; but I suspect that this is not the centre of the area over which the bird ranges, and have some reasons for believing that it is more abundant to the southward, in the direction of Popayan, where, as its rich colours would lead us to imagine, it dwells in a warmer climate; the bleak Paramos then are not its favourite abode; but the more genial regions below, at an elevation of from three thousand five hundred to six thousand feet, constitute a habitat congenial to its mode of life.

The *Helianthea Bonapartei* is certainly one of the most beautiful members of its genus. Mr. Mark tells me that the Spanish residents in Bogota call it “La Dorada,” or Golden Humming Bird, and “Siete colores,” or Seven colours, and that it is the universal favourite; this gentleman also states that in the spring months it is frequently met with near the villages of Guaduas and Fusugasuga, situate about two days’ journey from Bogota.

The sexes present the same differences that are found to exist in the *Helianthea typica*.

The male has: on the forehead a spot of luminous metallic green; lores, crown of the head and occiput velvety black; back, wing-coverts and sides of the neck dark bronzy green; rump and upper tail-coverts shining coppery red; wings purple-brown; throat and chest brilliant metallic green, with a gorget-shaped mark of deep shining blue in the centre of the former; abdomen resplendent metallic coppery red or flame-colour; tail and under tail-coverts bronze; bill black.

The female has the upper surface bronzy green, deepening into coppery bronze on the upper tail-coverts; throat buff; feathers of the sides of the neck and breast tipped with green; under tail-coverts buff.

The figures represent the two sexes of the size of life. The beautiful orchid is the *Stanhopea saccata*.