

## EUGENIA IMPERATRIX, *Gould.*

### Empress Humming Bird.

*Eugenia Imperatrix*, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1855, part xxiii. p. 192.—Athenæum, Nov. 17, 1855.

ON commencing the present Monograph of the Trochilidæ, I felt assured that, much as had been done, and splendid as were the collections in the possession of individuals and museums, more remained to be accomplished for a complete history of this important group of birds, and that the trackless forests and mountain districts of South America would, on exploration, be found to be tenanted by other novelties; and the acquisition of many new species, through the researches of the enterprising travellers who have of late years visited that country, has proved that my conjectures were not illusory. For the present remarkable species I am indebted to my friend Professor Jameson, of Quito, who discovered it in the temperate forests of the Ecuadorian Andes, extracting its food from a flower resembling that of the *Datura*. In reply to a letter I addressed to Mr. Jameson, asking for any particulars he could send me respecting this species, that gentleman says, "When your letter reached me, I was preparing to set out on an expedition to Cayambe, with the view of adding a few novelties to my botanical collections; but observing how pleased you were with the bird I last sent you, I preferred visiting once more the locality it inhabits. Descending a mountain-ridge, elevated about 11,000 feet above the sea-level, we enter a thick forest, extending to the shores of the Pacific. I have frequently travelled over the same ground, and have always derived great pleasure from observing the gradation of animal and vegetable life, so remarkable on the declivity of the Andes. At about 7000 feet there is at this season in flower a plant of extreme beauty, an *Alstræmeria* twining round the forest-trees, and bearing at the extremity of the stem a dense umbel of bell-shaped blossoms of two distinct colours, the outer petals being of a delicate rose colour, and the inner snow-white, spotted with dark purple; here this fine bird is sometimes to be found, attracted apparently by the *Alstræmeria*, whose range appears to be confined within very narrow limits. Upon the present occasion I was so fortunate as to procure another example, which I send you herewith."

The *Eugenia Imperatrix* is remarkable for its large size, deeply forked tail, and the harmonious hues of its plumage, which, although less glittering and metallic than in many other species, is nevertheless strikingly beautiful. The name of *Victoria regia* having been given to one of the finest flowers of South America, I have dedicated this new Humming Bird to the Empress of the French, as a just tribute to one, whose many virtues add lustre to the lofty position in which she is placed.

Face and fore part of the neck brilliant grass-green; crown of the head, back, neck, chest, and upper part of the flanks very deep green; on the centre of the throat a gorget of reddish violet; abdomen and under tail-coverts shining greenish yellow; wings purplish brown; tail deeply forked, the feathers black, narrow, and rigid; some tufts of white downy feathers across the lower part of the abdomen; thighs brown in front, white behind.

Female: upper surface green; throat, chest, and abdomen greyish white, spangled with green, the spangles being very minute on the throat, and gradually increasing in size downward to the flanks; tail blackish brown; tarsi white.

The Plate represents two males and a female on a species of *Datura*, all of the natural size.