

METALLURA TYRIANTHINA.

Tyrian-Tail.

- Trochilus tyrianthinus*, Lodd. in Proc. of Comm. of Sci. and Corr. of Zool. Soc., pt. 11. p. 6.
Ornismya Allardi, Bourc. Rev. Zool. 1839, p. 294.—Ib. Ann. Sci. Phys. &c. de Lyon, 1840, p. 226. pls. 3, 4.
——— *Paulinæ*, Boiss. Rev. Zool. 1839, p. 354.—Ib. Mag. de Zool. 1840, pl. 13.
Trochilus Allardi, Jard. Cont. to Orn. 1850, pp. 81–9, 151. pl. 55.
Mellisuga tyrianthinus, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 112, *Mellisuga*, sp. 36.
Metallura tyrianthina, Reich. Auf. der Col., p. 8.
——— *tyrianthinus*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 75, *Metallura*, sp. 4.—Ib. Rev. Zool. 1854, p. 253.
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THE *Metallura tyrianthina* was first described by the late Mr. George Loddiges in the "Proceedings of the Committee of Science and Correspondence of the Zoological Society of London" for the year 1832; it afterwards received the name of *Allardi* from M. Bourcier in 1839, and that of *Paulinæ*, in honour of Mademoiselle Pauline Barthod, from M. Boissonneau, in 1840. It is without exception one of the commonest species of the genus, and enjoys an extremely wide range of habitat, extending over at least 15 degrees of latitude, being abundant all along the Andean ranges, from the Gulf of Darien to Ecuador. It appears to be especially numerous in the neighbourhood of Santa Fé de Bogota, a large number of examples being contained in every collection sent from that country. It has been figured by Sir William Jardine in his "Contributions to Ornithology" for 1850, where he has also given some interesting notes furnished to him by Professor Jameson of Quito, and M. Bourcier, which notes I take the liberty of extracting:—

"Professor Jameson gives the western declivity of Pichincha as the habitat of this species, and states that 'it feeds generally on the flowers of a blue lupine, and that its habits resembled more those of an insect than one of the feathered tribe.'"

"This species," says M. Bourcier, "is scattered over all the mountains of New Grenada and Ecuador; it is met with on all the woody mountains, and also in the valleys (feeding from the flowers of all the different kinds of plants and orchids) visited by other species of the *Trochilidæ*. It braves the cold, and is one of the Humming-birds which is found on the flowers of the last shrubs which are met with in the high regions of the Paramos (cold mountains covered with grass, which separate the surrounding rocks of sand covered with snow from the other spots clothed with wood).

"This Humming-bird has a rapid flight; it lives solitary, and makes its nest in ravines, among groups of plants, shaded from the sun and rain; like the other species, it lays two white eggs.

"The female is red under the belly, without any fine colour on the throat. The young are covered with a blackish plumage. I never heard this species utter a cry."

The sexes differ considerably in colour, the female being much less gaily attired than her mate; she is also somewhat smaller in size.

The male has the upper and under surface and wing-coverts dark dull bronzy green; a small spot of white behind the eye; down the throat a lengthened mark of luminous green, bounded on each side by blackish brown; wings purplish brown; tail rich purplish bronze; bill black.

The female has the plumage of the upper surface golden-bronze; tail bronzy purple, lighter than that of the male, the lateral feathers tipped with greyish white; no trace of the green gorget, the throat and the whole of the under surface being mottled with light grey, reddish, and here and there reflexions of green; behind the eye a spot of white.

The figures are of the natural size. The plant is the *Ceanothus Lobbianus*.