

COMETES? CAROLI.

Charles's Comet.

Trochilus Caroli, Bourc. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xv. p. 48.—Ib. Rev. Zool. 1847, p. 260.

Hylocharis Caroli, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 115, *Hylocharis*, sp. 44.

——— *Caroli*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., tom. i. p. 74, *Hylocharis*, sp. 9.

Calliphlox Caroli, Reich. Auf. der Col., p. 12.—Ib. Troch. Enum., p. 10.

Avocettinus carolus, Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 256.

If ever a Humming-Bird perplexed the mind of the Trochilidist, it is the species figured on the accompanying Plate, inasmuch as it presents the colouring of a male with the form and contour of a female; of its history unfortunately we know nothing; and as all the specimens I have seen are alike, we have no means of determining if there exist any difference in the outward appearance of the sexes of this anomalous bird. It has frequently struck me that all these specimens, one or two of which are in the Loddigesian collection, are merely females of some splendid species of which we have not yet seen the male. If this supposition should ultimately prove to be correct, there still remains to be discovered a bird pertaining to this family of the greatest beauty and interest. Would that some enterprising collector might visit that little-known country Peru, and clear up the mystery which has ever hung over this subject! By dissection alone can it be determined whether the birds figured on the opposite Plate are males or females.

Crown, wing-coverts, and upper surface dull greenish bronze, becoming of a greener cast on the lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts; wings purplish brown; four middle tail-feathers bronzy green, the remainder black with violet reflexions, the outer one with a stripe of dull or buffy white along the apical portion of the outer web; behind the eye a small spot of white, and a small streak of buff from the angle of the mouth; throat red; under surface pale bronzy green, each feather slightly fringed with grey; on each flank near the back a tuft of white; vent and under tail-coverts buffy white, with a streak of brown down the centre of each feather; bill black.

Some difference appears to occur in the colouring of the throat, that part being much more scarlet in one of the specimens than in the others.

The figures are of the size of life. The plant is the *Govenia utriculata*.