

## LESBIA AMARYLLIS.

### Train-bearer.

*Trochilus Amaryllis*, Bourc. et Muls. Rev. Zool. 1848, p. 273.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. Supp. App. 30a, App. to p. 103.

*Cynanthus amaryllis*, Bonap. Consp. Troch. in Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 252.

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It must, I think, be apparent to every one who has studied natural history, that in every true genus some one character or set of characters predominates over the rest; and I may remark that in no department of this branch of science is this feature more conspicuous than among birds, where, in addition to some distinctive character being common to all the species of a genus, we frequently find that character carried in one or other of them to an extent far greater than in any of the others. In the genus *Lesbia*, the dominant feature is the great development of the tail-feathers, and it would appear to be carried to the utmost extent in the *Lesbia Amaryllis*, the feathers being very much longer in that species than in any other.

The native country of this singularly graceful bird, as well as of every other member of the genus, is the temperate regions of the Andes, for about ten degrees on each side of the equator. The *Lesbia Amaryllis* may be said to be strictly equatorial, being most abundant in Ecuador; its range, however, extends southward to Peru and northward to Bogota; in all the countries within this area, wherever situations favourable to its existence occur, it is to be found. Professor Jameson states that it frequents the gardens in the city of Quito, and is so familiar a bird that it is well known to every one. Mr. Mark, Her Majesty's Consul at Bogota, tells me that it is equally common in Bogota; that it was a daily visitor in the garden of his house, and was particularly fond of searching the flowers of the scarlet geraniums after a shower; if not frightened, it would then rest itself upon the plants and shrubs close to the window; when poised in the air with outspread tail, the rapid motion of its wings made a loud humming noise.

Like many other members of the family, this bird is very pugnacious, and frequent combats take place between the males whenever one intrudes into the domain of another, the contest being carried on in the air, and the combatants rising, falling, and continuing to fight after the manner described by Mr. Gosse when speaking of *Lampornis Mango*, in his interesting "Birds of Jamaica."

The female differs very considerably from the male both in size and colouring, and in the lesser development of the outer tail-feathers.

Among the numerous specimens sent to this country, young male examples may be found in every state of change from youth to maturity.

The male has the crown of the head, upper surface, wing-coverts, sides of the neck and under surface golden green; on the chin and throat a lengthened patch of brilliant metallic yellowish green; wings purplish brown; tail-feathers dull black, each tipped with rich greenish bronze; basal portion of the under surface of the shafts of the outer feathers brownish white; vent and under tail-coverts buff.

The very old female has the upper surface golden green; tail-feathers shorter than those of the male, and the shaft and external web of the outer one buff for two-thirds of its length from the base; down the centre of the throat a patch of brilliant metallic orange, on each side of which is a double row of brilliant green spots on a white ground; feathers of the chest greyish white with a spot of brilliant green at the tip of each.

In the young males the general colouring resembles that of the adult, but the throat-mark is merely indicated by a few specks of brilliant green on a buffy-grey ground, and the tail-feathers are much less developed.

The figures represent two males and a female on a species of *Passiflora*, of the natural size.