

LODDIGESIA MIRABILIS, *Gould.*

Marvellous Humming-Bird.

Trochilus mirabilis, Bourc. in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xv. p. 42.

Loddigiornis mirabilis, Bonap. in Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 256.

Mulsantia mirabilis, Reichenb. Aufz. der Col., p. 12.

Orthorhynchus mirabilis, Reichenb. Troch. Enum., p. 9.

I SCARCELY know how to commence my account of a Humming-Bird which has for so many years been an object of the highest interest, not only to myself, but to every one who has paid attention to the *Trochilidae*, and which I have made the type of my genus *Loddigesia*, a term proposed in honour of my much-valued and lamented friend the late Mr. George Loddiges. This extraordinary and beautiful bird was killed by Mr. Andrew Mathews, a botanist, who proceeded to Peru some thirty years ago for the purpose of collecting any rare and beautiful plants he might discover, and who, alas for science! like too many others whose enthusiasm has led them to distant lands for the like purpose, met with an untimely death. Thanks to the kindness of Miss Loddiges, I have now before me the original letter from Mr. Mathews to her father respecting this bird, sent prior to the transmission of the specimens. In it are tolerably accurate coloured sketches of two Humming-Birds which he conceived to be new to science, as indeed they were at the time: one of them is the bird in question, the other is the *Spathura Peruana*. Although this letter principally relates to other matters, it will be as well, perhaps, to transcribe the greater portion of it.

Chachapoyas, October 11th, 1835.

“DEAR SIR,

Your esteemed favour of the 6th reached me yesterday, per post from Lima. Since I left Lima I have added considerably to my collections, and also in Humming-Birds—several different from the 25 species sent you—and only wait a safe opportunity to send them from this to Lima. The two birds represented in the rough sketches sent herewith appear to me to be *new*. As yet I have met but one of each, and I believe them to be rare in the situations in which I shot them. The country has been in such a state of revolution for some time past, that it is very difficult to send large collections from this to the coast. I have sent two boxes of *Epiphytes* to Mr. Maclean at Lima, and am waiting an opportunity to forward more. But very few are known. Some of them are large-flowered and beautiful. Those from the Cordillera of this province are very hardy, but generally small-flowered. I had heard of the death of poor Douglas from Mr. Maclean, and regret it extremely. Science has lost one of its ablest and most indefatigable collectors. I can assure you that many times whilst travelling in this country my life has been exposed to imminent danger in the quelrados and bad roads of the Cordillera.

“I have the nests of three species of Humming-Birds of this province. It is difficult to meet with them (the boys of this country are not *bird-nest* hunters like those of England); it is only by chance I run against one whilst out collecting.

“With respects to Mr. William Loddiges, I beg to remain,

“Dear Sir,

“Yours very truly,

“ANDREW MATHEWS.”

“To George Loddiges, Esq., Hackney, London.”

“No. 1” (*Spathura Peruana*) “I shot at Moyobamba, the capital of the province of Maynas; and No. 2” (*Loddigesia mirabilis*) “at Chacapoyas, the capital of the department of the Amazonas. The latter is situated in the Cordillera, but is of a mild and even temperature, its average 64° Fahr.”

Mr. Mathews's sketch of *Loddigesia mirabilis* is very similar to that of the bird in a sitting position on the lower part of my plate; but Mr. Loddiges informed me that he had fully satisfied himself that,