

DISCURA LONGICAUDA.

Racket-tail.

- Trochilus longicaudus*, Gmel. Edit. Linn. Syst. Nat., tom. i. p. 498.
L'Oiseau-mouche à raquettes, Buff. Hist. Nat. des Ois., tom. vi. p. 23.—Ib. Sonn. Edit., tom. xvii p. 177.—Vieill. Ois. Dor., tom. i. p. 98. pl. 52.
Mellisuga longicauda, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 113, *Mellisuga*, sp. 55.
Discosura longicauda, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 84, *Discosura*, sp. 1.
Discura longicauda, Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 256.—Reichenb. Aufz. der Col., p. 8.
Trochilus platyrus, Lath. Ind. Orn., vol. i. p. 317.—Vieill. Nouv. Dict. d'Hist. Nat., tom. vii. p. 370.—Ib. Ency. Méth. Orn., part ii. p. 569.—Drapiez, Dict. Class. d'Hist. Nat., tom. iv. p. 327.—Prince Max, Beit. zur Naturg. von Bras., p. 96.
Ornismya platyrus, Less. Hist. Nat. des Ois.-mou., pp. xxij, 136. pl. 40.—Ib. Ind. Gen. et Syn. des Ois. du Gen. *Trochilus*, p. xxiv.—Ib. Traité d'Orn., p. 277.
Mellisuga platyrus, Steph. Cont. of Shaw's Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 242.
Racket-tailed Humming-bird, Lath. Gen. Syn., vol. ii. p. 782.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. viii. p. 316.—Lath. Gen. Hist., vol. iv. p. 338.
Trochilus (Ocreatus) ligonicaudus, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xiv. p. 86.
Discosura ligonicaudus, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 84, *Discosura*, sp. 2.
Discura platyrus, Reichenb. Aufz. der Col., p. 8.

It is to be regretted that the inappropriate name of *longicaudus* must be retained for this elegant little bird; that of *platyrus*, assigned to it by Latham, would be far more applicable; but the law of priority established by naturalists requires that the oldest name should be the one adopted, and I have no alternative but to bow to their decision.

Although the *Discura longicauda* has been long known to ornithologists, no information has reached us with respect to its habits and mode of flight, or on any other points connected with its economy. It does not belong, as might be supposed, to that division of the Humming-birds, found in the high mountains of Columbia and Peru, to which the generic name of *Spathura* has been given, but is much more intimately allied to the members of the genus *Gouldia*, which alliance is very clearly indicated by the band across the back, and by the form and colouring of the females. The native countries of this singular little bird are Cayenne, Guiana, and Demerara; it also extends its range to the northern parts of Brazil, being found, according to Mr. Reeves, in Bahia, Maranhão, and Para.

On reference to the above list of synonyms, it will be seen that I have given the name of *ligonicauda* to a bird belonging to this genus, being under the impression at the time that it was different, but I now believe it to be merely a local variety of this species.

Face and fore part of the neck green, which colour is continued on the chest, where the feathers become larger, longer, or tuft-like and more luminous, and some of them edged with grey; on the chin a small black spot; centre of the abdomen golden brown; lower part of the abdomen and under tail-coverts buffy brown; flanks golden green; wings purplish black; back and upper tail-coverts green; lower part of the back crossed by a band of buffy white; tail purplish brown, with a stripe of buff down the centre of each feather; the lateral feathers tapering and terminating in a large spatulate tip; bill black.

The female has the head greyish brown; upper and under surface green; across the lower part of the back a band of buffy white; upper tail-coverts black; wings purplish brown; tail grey, largely tipped with purplish black; a broad patch of black down the throat, bordered on each side by white.

The figures are of the natural size. The plant is the *Pitcairnia muscosa*.