

## LOPHORNIS HELENÆ.

### Princess Helena's Coquette.

*Ornismya Helenæ*, De Latt. Rev. Zool. 1843, p. 133.

*Mellisuga Helenæ*, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 113, *Mellisuga*, sp. 86.

*Lophornis helenæ*, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 83, *Lophornis*, sp. 4.

———— *helenæ*, Ib. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 257.

———— *Helenæ*, Reichenb. Aufz. der Colibris, p. 12.

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It will be seen that the bird figured in the accompanying Plate exhibits many extraordinary and peculiar features,—such a combination, in fact, as is not to be found in any other species; it is, moreover, as beautiful as it is *outré*, and these circumstances, combined with its great rarity, render it a highly desirable species to all collectors; the small number of specimens, however, that have been transmitted to Europe, and the high price they bear, have confined them to but few collections.

The native country of the *Lophornis Helenæ* is “Vera Paz near Petinck in the Republic of Guatemala,” where I believe all the specimens that have yet been sent to Europe were obtained by M. De Lattre. Would that that gentleman had, prior to his sudden and untimely death, given to the world some account of the habits and manners of this curious bird, as well as of the many other interesting species which must have come under his notice during his lengthened sojourn among the Andean Humming Birds!

The female is so extremely rare, that, so far as I am aware, only two examples have been sent to Europe; one of these is in the collection of Mr. Leadbeater, who kindly lent it to me to complete my illustration of the species, and to whom I am also indebted for many other similar favours connected with my various works.

M. De Lattre named this species *Helenæ*, in honour of the Princesse Hélène d'Orléans: “Cette noble princesse, protectrice des arts, qu'elle encourage et qu'elle cultive avec tant de goût, et dont la grande infortune rehausse le beau caractère. Puisse la Princesse Hélène accueillir avec bonté cette hommage d'un voyageur, heureux, dans les contrées lointaines, de conquérir cette rarissime espèce pour lui donner le nom d'une épouse et d'une mère si chère à la France!”

The male has the face and bifurcated crest green; throat luminous golden green; the luminous throat-mark surrounded by a series of elongated feathers, those on the sides of the neck, which are the longest, being buff streaked with bluish black, while those of the centre are wholly black; from the occiput, on either side, three very long, narrow, pointed and hair-like black feathers; upper surface and wing-coverts coppery bronze; wings purplish brown; rump deep bronzy brown, separated from the general hue of the upper surface by a narrow band of white; tail deep rufous, the central feathers glossed with bronzy green, and the remainder margined externally with dark brown; chest golden bronze; the remainder of the under surface white, with a spot of golden bronze at the tip of each feather; bill flesh-colour, darker at the point.

The female has the head, upper surface, wing-coverts and abdomen bronzy green; throat white, with a spot of bronzy green at the tip of each feather; rump dark brown, crossed by a band of white; tail buff, crossed by a dusky band near the tip.

The figures on the accompanying Plate represent a male and a female of the natural size.