

PANOPLITES JARDINI.

Jardine's Panoplites.

Trochilus Jardini, Bourc. Comptes rendus de l'Acad. des Sci., tom. xxxii. p. 187.

Florisuga jardinii, Bonap. Consp. Troch. in Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 253.

THE accompanying Plate is intended to represent one of the most beautiful of the Trochilidæ yet discovered; I say intended, for whatever success may have attended my attempts to convey an idea of the beauty of these exquisite living gems, I must confess that the means at my command are utterly inadequate to do justice to the present species, whose crown, back, shoulders and chest-sides are clothed with hues of metallic blue and green of such resplendent brilliancy, that it is quite impossible to represent them upon paper; those therefore of my readers who may wish to view them, must seek an opportunity for attentively examining the birds themselves.

The native country of this glittering gem is the temperate regions of Ecuador, where, in certain localities, it is tolerably common. It is still, however, a rare bird in Europe, and there are few collections which comprise examples, and none, I believe, so fine as those contained in my own. For these I am indebted to my good friend Professor Jameson, of Quito, a gentleman of high scientific attainments, and who has largely contributed to our knowledge of the Zoology and Botany of the rich district in which he resides. That he may have still a long life to enjoy, is, I am sure, the sincere wish of all his scientific friends and correspondents; among whom is included one whose name is familiar to every zoologist, as that of an ardent lover of natural history, and who has spent the greater part of his life in the promotion of its cause; need I add that I allude to Sir William Jardine, Bart., after whom this lovely bird has been named, by M. Bourcier, of Paris, as a just tribute to his merits as a naturalist.

M. Bourcier, who first brought the species to Europe, states that the bird inhabits the hot regions of the great forests in the environs of Nanégan. In the letter accompanying the specimens transmitted by Professor Jameson, he says: "Having from time to time procured from collectors a considerable number of fine species of *Trochilidæ* from an extensive forest about two days' journey distant from Quito, I could no longer resist my inclination to visit that part of the country; and as I particularly wished to ascertain the precise localities frequented by the more interesting species, I determined at once to carry my project into effect, and only regretted that you were not here to accompany me. You are aware that explorations in these countries are achieved at the expense of great bodily fatigue; the journey *on foot* usually commences at the upper boundary of the forest, say at 10,000 feet, and is continued downwards to that of 4000 above the sea-level. The Trochilidæ observed at the first-mentioned elevation, were *Eriocnemis Luciani*, *Agleactis cupripennis* and *Helianthea Lutetiæ*, all feeding on the flowers of the *Syphocampylus giganteus*. A little lower down, another species, unknown to me, frequented the flowers of different species of *Fuchsia*; and at a station 6000 feet, where I remained for the night, I saw for the first time that magnificent species named *Jardini*. It was by no means uncommon, and I shot a splendid specimen on a tree belonging to the family *Myrtaceæ*, which appeared to be its favourite haunt. From the height of the tree I could not reach the blossoms; all I could do was to procure a branch with the leaves, which are rather large."

Crown of the head shining violet-blue; back and sides of the neck velvety black; upper surface luminous metallic-bluish verditer green; wing-coverts shining yellowish green, passing into bronzy green towards the primaries; wings dark brownish purple; throat, breast and abdomen violet-blue, bordered on the sides of the neck and flanks with glittering green; under surface of the shoulder rust-red; lower part of the flanks, vent and under tail-coverts dusky black, the latter tipped with white; two centre tail-feathers dark bronzy purple, the remainder white, each margined externally and tipped with dull greenish black; upper tail-coverts dull bluish purple; bill black.

After a careful examination of the specimens, I believe that the sexes of this and the other species of the genus do not differ in their plumage.

The figures are of the natural size. The plant is a species of *Heliconia*.