

TOPAZA PYRA, Gould.

Fiery Topaz.

Trochilus (Topaza) pyra, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part xiv. p. 85.

Topaza pyra, Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. i. p. 110, *Topaza*, sp. 3.—Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av., p. 73.

THE late Mr. George Loddiges of Hackney, whose love for the Humming Birds was only equalled by his kind and amiable disposition, more than once said to me, "I think the *Trochilus pella* is the finest of all the *Trochilidæ*, and I believe it will always remain so, for we cannot imagine a more beautiful species." Had not his premature death deprived me of a friend, and natural science of one of its most enthusiastic devotees, I should have hastened with a corresponding enthusiasm to show him this new and still more lovely bird, well knowing that he would feel equal pleasure with myself in the discovery of a species still finer than that which he had ever regarded as the finest of its tribe: this gratification is however denied me; but another is still within my reach, that of stating that it was the sight of his fine collection, ever thrown open with the utmost readiness to my inspection, that first turned my attention to this beautiful group of birds, and determined me, since his lamented death, to attempt the delineation in a suitable manner of the forms in which he took so deep an interest.

The native habitat of the *Topaza pyra*, as far as we yet know, is the higher part of the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Upper Amazon; it is in this locality that all the specimens which have been sent to Europe were obtained: the interesting nest which I have figured was procured at Barra, and given to me by W. H. Edwards, Esq., author of "A Voyage up the River Amazon."

In the size of its body and the length of its wings the *T. pyra* is somewhat larger than *T. pella*, while at the same time it has a smaller bill, a more circumscribed gorget, a larger proportion of deep velvety black on the head and surrounding the gorget; the whole of the body of a rich fiery scarlet, without any pectoral band of crimson; and, lastly, the three lateral feathers on each side purplish black instead of buff, and of a narrower form—features by which it may be at once distinguished from its near ally.

The nest is precisely similar in form and materials to that of *T. pella*, and the eggs are also white and two in number.

Abdomen, sides, back and shoulders luminous fiery red; head, ear-coverts, back of the neck and a band crossing the lower part of the neck deep velvety black; throat luminous pale green, passing into rich orange in the centre; two centre tail-feathers purplish green, the remainder deep purple; the feather on each side the centre ones much elongated, and crossing each other near the base; upper tail-coverts luminous light green with red reflexions; under tail-coverts luminous green; primaries purplish brown; black; feet blackish brown.

The figures are of the natural size.