

PHAËTHORNIS OSERYI.

D'Osery's Hermit.

Trochilus Oseryi, Bourc. et Muls. in Ann. Sci. Phys. &c. de Lyon, May 7, 1852.

Ametrornis Oseryi, Reich. Auf. der Col., p. 14.

Orthornis oseryi, Bonap. Rev. Zool. 1854, p. 249.

Phaethornis villosus, Lawr. in Ann. Lyc. Nat. Hist. New York, vol. vi. p. 259.

WHAT could have induced the late Prince Charles Bonaparte and Dr. Reichenbach to separate this bird generically from the genus *Phaethornis* I know not. Certain it is that nothing could be more fallacious, or better calculated to bring science into contempt. No excuse can, indeed, be offered for their so doing, since I believe that neither of them could have personally examined the bird, but that they proposed their generic titles from the mere descriptions of the species: had they ever seen it, they would have compared it with my *P. hispidus*, and perhaps questioned if the two species were not one and the same; instead of which they have made *hispidus* generically distinct, under the name of *Ptyonornis*,—at least, Dr. Reichenbach has done so. It is such measures as these which give the monographer so much trouble in unravelling the confusion they have made, and impose upon him the unpleasant task of pointing out such gross errors. I should not have spoken thus strongly on the subject had there been the slightest perceptible difference in form between this bird, the *P. superciliosus*, *P. Eurynome*, and other species which these authors admit are typical *Phaethorni*. For the separation of the smaller members of the genus under the subgeneric title of *Pygmornis* proposed by Bonaparte, and *Eremita* by Reichenbach, some excuse may be made, those little birds forming a very natural subdivision, although, as will be seen, I have retained them all under the generic name of *Phaethornis*. We now come to more important points with regard to this species—the country it inhabits, and whether it be or be not identical with *P. hispidus*, a name published six years prior to that of *Oseryi*.

The native habitat of Osery's Hermit is that portion of the Andes lying between Bogota and Ecuador. I have specimens from both these countries now lying before me,—one received in an ordinary collection from Santa Fé, and another from Archidona through the kindness of Professor Jameson. I am also indebted to Mr. Lawrence of New York for another example, which was collected by Mr. Moore in Ecuador. Mr. Lawrence, on comparing his specimens with my Plate of *P. hispidus*, came to the conclusion that they were distinct from that species, and being unaware that the bird had been described in Europe under the name of *Oseryi*, proposed for it the specific term of *villosus*. I agree with Mr. Lawrence that there are sufficient grounds for considering it distinct from the *P. hispidus*, that bird being of a larger size, and having the feathers of the throat of greater length and more distinctly margined with grey, while the lengthened greyish-white throat-mark seen in all my specimens of *Oseryi* is wanting in *hispidus*. This latter species also inhabits a different country, being, so far as we yet know, only found in the southern country of Bolivia, where it doubtless represents the *Oseryi* of more northern latitudes.

M. Bourcier has dedicated this species to the Count d'Osery, the unfortunate "compagnon de voyage" of the Count de Castelnau.

Head, upper surface and wing-coverts bronzy green, browner on the head; ear-coverts dark brown, bordered above and below with a line of greyish white; upper tail-coverts bronzy green, with a crescentic mark of blackish brown near the end, and tipped with grey; tail very dark green at the base for half its length, and as far as this colour extends the shafts are white, except those of the two central feathers, which are dark; the remainder of the tail is brownish black, the lateral feathers narrowly edged with greyish white on their inner webs near the end, and a broader mark of white on the edge of the outer webs, the projecting ends of the central feathers gradually fading into white; throat and breast ashy brown, intermixed with greyish white, presenting a rough shaggy appearance; there is also a white line running down the centre of the throat to the breast; abdomen greyish white; under tail-coverts ashy brown with grey margins; wings purplish brown; upper mandible and point of the lower mandible black, the basal portion of the latter yellow; irides black; feet yellowish.

The figures are of the size of life. The plant is the *Anguloa uniflora*.