

PHAËTHORNIS CEPHALUS.

Mexican Hermit.

Trochilus cephalus, Bourc. et Muls. Rev. Zool. 1848, p. 269.—Gray and Mitch. Gen. of Birds, vol. iii. Supp. App. 30 a., App. to vol. i. p. 103.

——— *longirostris*, De Latt. Echo du Monde Savant, June 15, 1843, No. 45. col. 1070?

Phaethornis cephalus, Bonap. Rev. et Mag. de Zool. 1854, p. 249.

Ptyonornis cephalus, Reichenb. Aufz. der Colibris, p. 14.

THE occurrence of this bird in Veragua, Guatemala and Mexico proves that the larger *Phaethorni* are not confined to the countries south of the Isthmus, but, like many other forms, are represented in Central America by species peculiar to that part of the continent.

The *Phaethornis cephalus* was first brought to this country by M. Sallé, the celebrated French traveller and collector; the single specimen he first procured, and from which M. Bourcier took his description, was for a long time the only one known; it is now in my own collection. This example bears a label purporting that it was killed by M. Sallé on the "Rivière San Juan de Nicaragua." Besides this original specimen, I possess others which were transmitted to me direct from Guatemala by George U. Skinner, Esq., and have more recently acquired others which were collected by M. Sallé near, I believe, Cordova in Southern Mexico.

I observe that some variation exists in the colouring of the tips of the outer tail-feathers, attributable, I believe, to a difference in the age of the individuals. In the original or typical specimen, the tips of all the tail-feathers, except those of the two middle ones, are of a uniform buff, while in others this buffy colouring occupies only the inner margins of the feathers, the outer margins being white, and in others again both margins are white. In size the *P. cephalus* nearly equals the *P. superciliosus*, but it differs from that species in having a shorter and more curved bill and a shorter and more rounded tail; the four external feathers on each side being individually less acutely pointed; the crown of the head in *P. cephalus* is also darker, the rump-feathers more buffy, and the colouring of the under surface of a lighter or more uniform buff than in *P. superciliosus*.

It has been considered probable by one or two ornithological friends that a bird described by M. De Lattre in the "Echo du Monde Savant" for June 1843, under the name of *Trochilus longirostris*, may be identical with the present species, in which case his name would have the priority; but it could scarcely be retained with propriety, that appellation having been bestowed upon another member of the family.

Head greyish brown; upper surface and wing-coverts bronzy brown; lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts buff, barred with blackish brown; wings purplish brown; lores and ear-coverts blackish brown, bounded above and below by stripes of buffy white; under surface light greyish buff; down the centre of the throat a line of pure buff, bounded on either side by a clouding of grey; all the tail-feathers bronzy green at the base, passing into brownish black, the lateral feathers with an arrow-head-shaped mark of buff at the tip; the apical or lengthened portion of the two middle feathers white, gradually blending with the dark hue of their middle portion; upper mandible black; basal three-fourths of the under mandible fleshy, the tip black.

The figures are the size of life. The plant is the *Brassavola lineata*.