

It may not be out of place now to give a few extracts from the works of those authors who have written on the Trochilidæ in general or on some particular species. A perusal of these will tend to confirm much that I have said; and it is but fair that the writings of those who have wielded the pen in elucidation of the history, habits, and manners of these lovely birds should be duly recognized.

It is fortunate for the science of Ornithology that so many persons gifted with the power of expressing their ideas in elegant and poetical language should have bestowed a large share of their attention upon the Humming-Bird. The writings of Buffon, Wilson, Waterton, Audubon, Gosse, and others, treating exclusively on natural history, are not, perhaps, so generally known as they ought to be; the extracts from these authors will therefore, I doubt not, be found of interest.

“Of all animated beings,” says Buffon, “this is the most elegant in form and the most brilliant in colour. The stones and metals polished by art are not comparable to this gem of Nature: she has placed it in the order of Birds, but among the tiniest of the race—*maxime miranda in minimis*; she has loaded it with all the gifts of which she has only given other birds a share. Agility, rapidity, nimbleness, grace, and rich attire, all belong to this little favourite. The emerald, the ruby, and the topaz, glitter in its garb, which is never soiled with the dust of earth; for, leading an aerial life, it rarely touches the turf even for an instant. Always in the air, flying from flower to flower, it shares their freshness and their splendour, lives on their nectar, and only inhabits those climates in which they are unceasingly renewed. The Humming-Bird seems to follow the sun, to advance, to retire with him, and to fly on the wings of the wind in pursuit of an eternal spring.”

“Nature in every department of her works,” says Wilson, “seems to delight in variety; and the present subject is almost as singular for its minuteness, beauty, want of song, and manner of feeding, as the preceding (the Mocking-Bird) is for unrivalled excellence of notes and plainness of plumage. This is one of the few birds that are universally beloved; and amidst the sweet dewy serenity of a summer’s morning, his appearance among the arbours of honeysuckles and beds of flowers is truly interesting.

“When morning dawns, and the blest sun again
Lifts his red glories from the eastern main,
Then through our woodbines, wet with glittering dews,
The flower-fed Humming-Bird his round pursues;
Sips with inserted tube the honied blooms,
And chirps his gratitude as round he roams;
While richest roses, though in crimson drest,
Shrink from the splendour of his gorgeous breast.
What heavenly tints in mingling radiance fly!
Each rapid movement gives a different dye;
Like scales of burnished gold they dazzling show—
Now sink to shade, now like a furnace glow!”

“Where is the person,” says Audubon, speaking of the *Trochilus Colubris*, “who, on seeing this lovely little creature moving on humming winglets through the air, suspended as if by magic in it, flitting from one flower to another with motions as graceful as they are light and airy, pursuing its course and yielding new delights wherever it is seen—where is the person, I ask, who, on observing this glittering fragment of the rainbow, would not pause, admire, and turn his mind with reverence towards the Almighty Creator, the wonders of whose hand we at every step discover, and of whose sublime conceptions we everywhere observe the manifestations in his admirable system of creation? There breathes not such a person; so kindly have we all been blessed with that intuitive and noble feeling—admiration.