

sitions, and modes of life which are not to be noticed in any other group of birds: their cylindrical bills, double-tubed tongues, enormously developed sternums, and corresponding pectoral muscles, rigid primaries (the first of which is the longest), and their diminutive feet separate them from all others. In the Swifts and Fissirostral birds generally, the sexes are alike in outward appearance; in the Humming-Birds they are in nearly every instance totally different in their colouring; in the former the young assume the livery of the adult before they leave the nest, while the contrary is the case with the Humming-Birds. How different, too, is the texture of the luminous feathers with which they are clothed; and vastly diversified in form as the tail is in the various genera, the number of feathers in the whole of them is invariably ten. In their disposition they are unlike birds, and approach more nearly to insects. Many of the species fearlessly approach almost within reach of the hand; and if they enter an open window, which curiosity may lead them to do, they may be chased and battled with round the apartment until they fall exhausted; and if then taken up by the hand, they almost immediately feed upon any sweet, or pump up any fluid, that may be offered them, without betraying either fear or resentment at their previous treatment. A *Trochilus Colubris*, captured for me by some friends at Washington (Baron Osten Sacken, Mr. Odo Russell, and his brother Mr. Arthur Russell), immediately afterwards partook of some saccharine food that was presented to it, and in two hours it pumped the fluid out of a little bottle whenever I offered it; and in this way it lived with me a constant companion for several days, travelling in a little thin gauzy bag distended by a slender piece of whalebone and suspended to a button of my coat. It was only necessary for me to take the little bottle from my pocket to induce it to thrust its spiny bill through the gauze, protrude its lengthened tongue down the neck of the bottle, and pump up the fluid until it was satiated; it would then retire to the bottom of its little home, preen its wing- and tail-feathers, and seem quite content.

The specimens I brought alive to this country were as docile and fearless as a great moth or any other insect would be under similar treatment. The little cage in which they lived was twelve inches long, by seven inches wide, and eight inches high. In this was placed a diminutive twig of a tree, and, suspended to the side, a glass phial which I daily supplied with saccharine matter in the form of sugar or honey and water, with the addition of the yolk of an unboiled egg. Upon this food they appeared to thrive and be happy during the voyage along the sea-board of America and across the Atlantic, until they arrived within the influence of the climate of Europe. Off the western part of Ireland symptoms of drooping unmistakeably exhibited themselves; but, although they never fully rallied, I, as before stated, succeeded in bringing one of them alive to London, where it died on the second day after its arrival at my house. The vessel in which I made the passage took a northerly course, which carried us over the banks of Newfoundland; and although the cold was rather severe during part of the time, the only effect it appeared to have upon my little pets was to induce a kind of torpidity, from which, however, they were readily aroused by placing them in the sunshine, or in some warm situation, such as before a fire, in the bosom, &c. I do assure my readers that I have seen these birds cold and stiff, and to all appearance dead, and that from this state they were readily restored by a little attention and removal into light and heat, when they would "perk up," flutter their little wings, and feast away upon their usual food as if in the best state of health.

How wonderful must be the mechanism which sets in motion and sustains for so lengthened a time the vibratory movements of a Humming-Bird's wings! To me their action appeared unlike anything of the kind I had ever seen before, and strongly reminded me of a piece of machinery acted upon by a powerful spring. I was particularly struck by this peculiarity in the flight, as it was exactly the opposite of what I