

To the southward of the equator, however, the species appear to be far less numerous. And it could not be expected but that such would be the case when we consider the particular character of the country,—the dry and sterile plains of Peru, the extensive pampas of La Plata, &c., being all unsuited to insect and therefore to Humming-Bird life, and a diminution in their numbers the natural result. But this paucity in numbers would seem to be compensated for, by the beauty of the individuals. Peru and Bolivia are the cradles of the splendid comet-tailed species of the genus *Cometes*, the *Lesbiæ*, *Diphlogæneæ*, the delicate birds known as *Thaumasturæ*, &c. These countries produce also the largest Humming-Bird yet known, the *Patagona gigas*, which with an *Oreotrochilus* and a *Eustephanus* are all the species known to me from the lengthened country of Chili. The little island called Chiloe, characterized by great humidity, is inhabited by the common Chilian species last mentioned; while the celebrated island of Juan Fernandez, over 300 miles from the mainland, is tenanted by three kinds, of which two are so distinct from all others known, that they cannot for a moment be confounded with any of them. The three species, in fact, which people this solitary spot in the wide Pacific are very different from each other; and I may mention that nothing like a cross or intermixture has ever been observed, an event that might have been expected to occur here, if ever it does among animals living in a state of nature. Strange to say, these beautiful creatures are almost the only examples of bird life existing on this remarkable island. The knowledge of the existence of these lovely flying gems gives an additional zest to the interest attached to the scene of the principal events in Defoe's charming tale.

In the foregoing pages I have glanced at the species of Humming-Birds inhabiting the great range of mountains running north and south through many degrees of latitude on both sides of the equator. Whole genera of the Trochilidæ are found there, and there alone. In the high lands of Mexico, among others we find the peculiar genera *Delatiria*, *Selasphorus*, and *Calypste*. On crossing the ribbon-like strip of land called the Isthmus of Panama, we enter upon a region of high lands bearing the genera *Oxygogon*, *Lafresnaya*, *Bourcieria*, *Doryfera*, *Helianthea*, *Heliangelus*, *Eriocnemis*, *Lesbia*, *Cynanthus*, *Aglæactis*, *Metallura*, *Ramphomicron*, and many others, none of which are found in the less-elevated countries of Brazil, the Guianas, or the West Indian Islands. It is true that these countries, particularly Brazil, possess forms of Humming-Birds which are now and then feebly represented in the Andes; but these cases are quite exceptional. When we leave the Andes we bid adieu to the finest, the largest, and the most gorgeously attired species. Other beautiful kinds do here and there exist in Brazil, such as the *Chrysolampis moschitus*, the *Topaza Pella*, and the *Lophornithes*; but the greater number are comparatively small and inconspicuous. Of the members of the genus *Phaëthornis*, a group of Humming-Birds, popularly known by the name of Hermits, from their frequenting the darkest and most retired parts of the forest, three-fourths are natives of Brazil. The great forest-covered delta of the Amazon, where palms are numerous, seems to be particularly unfavourable to the Trochilidæ, since from Para to Ega there are scarcely ten species of the family to be met with.

In this cursory glance at the distribution of this family of Birds, those frequenting the West Indian Islands have yet to be noticed; and here not only do we find some peculiar to those islands as a whole, but in each of them, with but very few exceptions, there are species and even genera which are not found in the Andes, the other islands, or the more contiguous flat parts of the South American Continent. Cuba has at least three, one of which is a most lovely little bird. The principal island of the Bahaman group is in like manner favoured with a charming *Calothorax*, which Dr. Bryant tells us flies in great numbers round the town of Nassau; yet the bird does not, I believe, inhabit any of the other islands or the mainland.