

## INTRODUCTION.

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IT will, I am sure, be conceded, that next to illustrating the ornithology of a particular country, monographs of families or genera are of the greatest interest, since they tend to increase our knowledge of the science far more than mere descriptions of new species ; with this view, therefore, I have from time to time turned my attention to the investigation of some one or other of those groups, respecting which much confusion existed, or which had not received the attention that their interesting nature appeared to demand. In selecting those of the *Ramphastideæ* and *Trogonideæ* for the subjects of my previous monographs, I must fairly admit that I was as much influenced by the singularity of their form, and by the splendour of their plumage, as by the fortunate acquisition of many species entirely unknown to science ; the subjects of the present monograph, on the other hand, though not remarkable for brilliancy of colouring, are, independently of their claims to notice in a scientific point of view, well worthy of illustration, from their utility to man, both as articles of food and as objects of sport, a utility prospectively important whenever the vast countries of which they are denizens shall become entirely under the dominion of civilization ; nor can we overlook their value as objects for our aviaries, and for naturalization in Europe ; many of the species would live in the warmer parts of the Continent, and some of them are sufficiently hardy to brave the severities of our winters, and would doubtless thrive in situations similar to those that are suitable to our own Partridge.

To these preliminary remarks I may add, that this section of the *Gallinaceæ* has received no inconsiderable share of my attention for the last twenty years, during which period I have availed myself of every possible opportunity of becoming acquainted with the subject ; and I would here record my sense of the kind assistance rendered to me on all hands, particularly by my late lamented friend Mr. John