

INTRODUCTION.

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would be as reasonable (and as unnatural) to withdraw these birds from their respective families and form of them a new three-toed family, as to separate the Kingfishers from the Trogons for the reasons assigned. As an instance how totally unable the Trogons are to use their feet for any thing like climbing, we may mention that the Trogons of South America feed principally on fruit, which one would think they would get by climbing or walking after if they could. But no; they take their station on a bare branch about the middle of the tree, and having fixed their attention on some particular tempting fruit they dart at it, seize it dexterously on the wing, and return to their original seat. Often while waiting under a fruit-tree for Chatterers or Pigeons, have we received the first intimation of the presence of a Trogon by the '*whir-r-r*' of its wings as it darted after a fruit. It is curious that this habit seems confined to the Trogons of America. In the East I have never yet observed it, and in the numerous specimens I have opened nothing has been found but insects. The African Trogons also appear to be wholly insectivorous."

Mr. Salvin has also kindly forwarded a note on the American Trogons, as they have come under his observation during his travels:—"In habits, Trogons are inactive whilst at rest, and they remain a considerable time almost motionless on the branch on which they are perched. The position of the body when thus resting is nearly vertical, and the tail hangs at but a slight angle from the vertical line. Their flight is short, rapid, and spasmodic; but they appear to seize most of their food, whether it be insect or fruit, when on the wing. Of the former, the larvæ are mostly preferred, and I have not unfrequently found large caterpillars in the stomachs of those I shot.

"Trogons are usually found singly or in pairs; but I have, when in pursuit of Quezals, on rare occasions seen several individuals at one time. Then, perhaps excited by the calls of the hunter, they evince unusual activity, and fly from tree to tree and branch to branch uttering a chattering note. Trogons always remain under the shade of the forest-trees. They are to be met with on boughs at some distance from the ground, but not in the tops of the trees."