

## INTRODUCTION.

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hollows of trees. It may be so in many cases and with some species. The only nest we ever saw, which was of the Toco Toucan, was in the fork of a large tree, over the water, upon the Amazon.

"Toucans, when tamed, are exceedingly familiar, playful birds, capable of learning as many feats as any of the Parrots, with the exception of talking.

"When turning about on their perch, they effect their object by one sudden jump. They eat anything, but are particularly fond of meat.

"When roosting they have a habit of elevating their tails over their backs. The beaks of the Red-billed Toucans are richly marked with red, yellow, and black; but preserved specimens soon lose their beauty.

"The other varieties found near Pará are the *Pteroglossus maculirostris* (Licht.), the *P. bitorquatus* (Vig.), and the *P. viridis*."

But few notes have been written on the Toucans of the Pacific side of America; I find, however, the following in the 'Zoology of the Voyage of the Sulphur,' by the late R. B. Hinds, Esq. :—

"In our examination of the west coast of America from south to north, the *Ramphastidæ* were first seen at Atacames, which is a little south of the equator; and they were subsequently often noticed at the different places touched at as far as the Gulf of Fonseca, in 13° 17' N. Lat. This is, however, most certainly not their geographical limit, and probably not even on the coast."—Zool. of Voy. of Sulphur, p. 46.

Latham and some of the older authors mention a Preacher Toucan, but which species is intended is by no means clear. The name may possibly have arisen from the following note in the 42nd volume of the Gentleman's Magazine, p. 505 :—

"The genus is confined to the hotter parts of South America; near Carthagena is found a bird called Preacher, from the custom of its perching above its companions, and with a ridiculous motion of its head, attended with its harsh note, as it were uttering a discourse."

By Linnæus and the older writers, all the members of this group known to them were comprised in the single genus *Ramphastos*. In the year 1811, however, Illiger separated the smaller and more elegantly-formed species, popularly known as *Araçaris*, into a distinct genus, to which he gave the name of *Pteroglossus*. Since that period we have acquired a much more extensive acquaintance with the subject, and we find that a still further subdivision of the family is necessary; indeed they appear to be naturally divided into five or six distinct sections or genera, each having well-marked characters not found in any of the others. The genus *Ramphastos* of Linnæus must of course be retained for the Toucans, distinguished by their large and gaily-coloured bills, and the black colouring of their plumage; in like manner Illiger's genus *Pteroglossus* is retained for the *Araçaris*, birds having a more elegant contour, and whose bodies are clothed in green above and yellow and red beneath. In both these sections the sexes are alike in colour.