

INTRODUCTION.

Most of the species, if not all, incubate in the holes of trees, laying two eggs at a time, of a delicate white.

The true Toucans, unlike many of the Araçaris, offer no sexual difference in the colour of the plumage; but the females are rather less than the males in all their proportions. The young of both genera assume at a very early age the adult colouring: their large bills, however, as might naturally be expected, are not fully developed for a considerable period.

Their flight is straight, and appears not to be effected without considerable exertion; while, on the contrary, among the trees, &c., they are as quick and graceful as can well be imagined, leaping from branch to branch with the most elegant agility.

In a state of repose, they turn their heads over their shoulders, the bill being completely hidden among the plumage of the upper parts and greater wing-coverts, and the tail raised vertically over the back, in which state the bird resembles a ball of feathers.

The habits of these birds in confinement, as observed on two of the species, have been admirably delineated in two papers published a few years since in the "Zoological Journal," by Mr. Broderip and Mr. Vigors. The details given by the latter gentleman are particularly valuable: they were derived from the observation of an individual of the Ariel Toucan, kept by him for several years, and are almost universally known on account of the numerous reprints of them which have been induced by the graceful manner in which they are recorded, no less than by the interest of the facts themselves.

With these few preliminary observations I dismiss the general subject, and proceed to offer some remarks on the distribution of the species which have fallen under my notice.

I. The Toucans are distinguished among the *Ramphastidae* by the very disproportionate size of their bills, and by the comparative shortness and square termination of the tail. The general colour of their feathering is black; but the throat and the upper and under tail-coverts assume, in all the species yet known, a colouring different from that of the ground. The colour of the under tail-coverts appears to be invariably crimson; that of the upper tail-coverts is either crimson, white, or yellow, according to the several species. The throat is either white or yellow; and is terminated behind by a crimson band, which is in some species very narrow,