

The CABIAI, or THICK-NOSED TAPIR*.

THIS animal was never seen in Europe, till the Duke de Bouillon had a young one transmitted to him from America. As this Prince is exceedingly curious with regard to foreign animals, he has sometimes done me the honour of inviting me to examine them, and has even been kind enough to present me with se-

* The thick-nosed tapir has the fore-hoofs divided into four, and the hind hoofs into three, a very large and thick head and nose, small rounded ears, and large black eyes. The upper jaw is longer than the lower. There are two strong and great cutting teeth in each jaw; eight grinders in each jaw, and each of these grinders form on their surface seemingly three teeth, each flat at their ends. The legs are short, and the toes long, connected near their bottoms by a small web; their ends are guarded by a small hoof. It has no tail. The hair on the body is short, rough, and brown. On the nose there are long and hard whiskers. It grows to the size of a hog of two years old; Pennant's *Synopf. of Quad.* p. 83.

Caby-bara; *Marcegron. Brasfl.* p. 230. *Pijs, Brasfl.* p. 99. *Raili Synopf. Quad.* p. 126.

River hog; *Wesler in Dampier*, vol. iii. p. 400.

Cochon d'eau; *Des Marchais*, tom. iii. p. 315.

Sus maximus palustris. Cabiai, cabionara; *Barrers, Franc. Espin.* p. 160.

Capiward; *Froger's Voyage*, p. 99.

Sus hydrocharus, plantis tridactylis, cauda nulla; *Linn. Syst. Nat.* p. 103.

veral species. The animal under consideration was killed by the coldness of the climate before it had acquired its full growth. It is not a hog, as has been alledged by naturalists and travellers; for it has only some slight relations to the hog, and differs from him in some remarkable characters. The cabiai never exceeds the size of a hog of eighteen months old. Its head is shorter, and its mouth less. Its feet are also very different from those of the hog; for its toes are connected by membranes. It has larger eyes and shorter ears. In dispositions and manners, it differs not less from the hog, than in the structure of its parts. It lives much in the water, where it swims like an otter, catches fishes with its mouth and feet, and eats them on the banks. It likewise eats grain, fruits, and sugar canes. As its feet are long and broad, it often sits on the hind ones. Instead of the grunting of a hog, its cry rather resembles the braying of an ass. It seldom walks but in the night, and then generally in company, without removing far from the margin of the water. As it runs badly, on account of the length of its feet, and the shortness of its legs, its safety consists not in flight. To escape the hunters, it plunges into the water, swims to a great distance, and remains so long concealed that they lose all hopes of getting another view of it. The flesh of it is fat and tender; but, like that of the otter, it has rather the taste of bad fish than of good flesh. It

has been remarked, however, that its head is pretty good, which corresponds with what is said of the beaver, that the flesh of its anterior parts is well tasted, while that of the posterior parts has the taste of fish. The cabiai is of a gentle and peaceable disposition; it neither quarrels, nor does mischief to other animals. It is easily tamed, obeys the voice, and follows spontaneously those with whom it is acquainted, and who treat it kindly. At Paris, it was fed with barley, salads, and fruits, and continued in good condition during the warm season. From the great number of pups, it appears, that the female is very prolific. We are ignorant of the times of gestation and growth, and consequently of the duration of its life. Our colonists at Cayenne might inform us with regard to these articles; for this animal is pretty common in Guiana, as well as in Brasil, the country of the Amazons, and other low lands of South America.

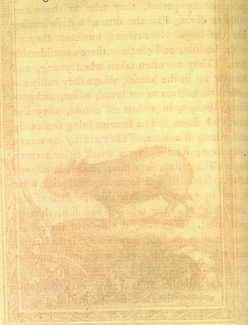
S U P P L E M E N T.

WE have little to add to the history and description of this American animal. M. de la Borde writes us, that it is very common in Guiana, and still more so in the neighbourhood
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of the Amazon river, where the fishes are very numerous. He remarks, that these animals go always in pairs, a male and a female; and that the largest of them weigh about a hundred pounds. They fly from the abodes of men, never leave the banks of rivers, and, when they perceive any person, they take to the water, without diving like the otters, but swimming like the hogs. Sometimes, however, they go to the bottom, and continue there a considerable time. They are often taken when young, and brought up in the houses, where they easily accustom themselves to eat bread, millet, and pot-herbs, though, in a state of nature, they live chiefly on fishes. The females bring forth only one young at a time. They are by no means dangerous; for they never attack either men or dogs. Their flesh is white, tender, and well tasted. This last fact seems to contradict what is said by other travellers, that the flesh of the cabiai has rather the taste of bad fish, than of good meat. However, the flesh of the cabiai, when it lives on fish, may have this bad taste, and, when fed with bread or grain, it may be very good.

As we had this animal alive in Paris, and kept it a long time, I am persuaded that it might be propagated in our climate. I mentioned above, p. 65. that it was killed by the cold. But I have since been informed, that it

endured the winter's cold very well; but, as it was shut up in a garret, it threw itself down from the window, and fell into a vessel full of water, where it was drowned; which would not have happened, if it had not been hurt in the fall upon the edge of the vessel.



THE CABIAL, &c.

Plate CCVII.



1788. capy.

CABIAL.