

## The CANADA PORCUPINE\*.

**T**HIS animal has never received a proper name. Placed by Nature in the desert regions of North America, it enjoys an independent existence, remote from man, from whom it has obtained no denomination, which is the first badge of his empire. Hudson having discovered the land which it inhabits, we

\* The Canada porcupine has short ears, hid in the fur. The head, body, legs, and upper part of the tail, are covered with soft, long, dark brown hair. On the upper part of the head, back, body, and tail, there are numbers of sharp, strong quills. The longest are on the back, the least towards the head and sides. The longest are three inches; but all are hid in the hair. Intermixed are some stiff straggling hairs, three inches longer than the rest, and tipped with dirty white. The under side of the tail is white. There are four toes on the fore feet, five behind, each armed with long claws, hollowed on their under side. The form of the body is exactly that of the beaver, but is not half the size. One which Mr. Banks brought from Newfoundland was about the size of a hare, but more compactly made. The tail was about six inches long; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 266.

The porcupine from Hudson's Bay; *Edw. Hist. of Birds*, p. 52.  
*Ellis's Voyag.* p. 42. *Clerk's Voyag.* vol. i. p. 177. 191.

*Cavia Hudsonis*; *Klein. Quad.* p. 51.

*Hystrix aculeis sub pilis occultis, cauda brevi et crassa*; *Brisson. Quad.* p. 87.

*Hystrix dorsata, palmis tetradactylis, plantis pentadactylis, cauda mediocri, dorso solo spinoso*; *Linn. Syst. Nat.* p. 76.  
L'Urion; *Buffon.*

84 THE CANADA PORCUPINE.

shall give it a name which recalls that of its first master, and indicates, at the same time, its poignant and bristly nature. Besides, it was necessary to bestow a name upon it, to prevent its being confounded with the porcupine, or the coendou, which it resembles in some characters, but differs so widely from them in all others, that it ought to be regarded as a particular species. It likewise belongs to a northern climate, while the other two are natives of the south.

Edwards, Ellis, and Catesby, have all mentioned this animal. The figures given by the two first authors correspond with ours; and we doubt not but they are the same species. We are even tempted to believe, that the animal described and engraved by Seba\*, under the name of a singular East India porcupine, and which was afterwards pointed out by Klein†, Brisson‡, and Linnæus§, in their methodical catalogues, by the characters given by Seba, might be the same with the animal under question. This would not, as formerly remarked, be the only time that Seba has exhibited American animals as belonging to the East Indies. We cannot,

\* Porcus aculeatus sylvestris, sive Hydrix orientalis singularis: Seba, vol. i. p. 84. tab. 52. fig. 2.

† Acantion cauda prolonga acutis pilis horrida, in extremitate panniculata: Klein de Quad. p. 67.

‡ Hydrix cauda longissima, aculeis undique obtusis, in extremitate panniculata. Hydrix Orientalis. The Indian porcupine; Brisson. Regn. Anim. p. 131.

§ Hydrix macroura, pedibus pentadactylis, cauda longissima, aculeis clavatis; Linn. Syst. Nat. p. 77.

however,

Plate CXXI.



VERNON.

however, be so certain with regard to this animal as we have been with several others. We shall only say, that the resemblances appear to be very great, and the differences but slight; and that, as these animals are little known, the differences may be only individual varieties, or those which distinguish males and females.

The Canada porcupine might be called the *bristly beaver*. It is a native of the same country, is of the same size, and has nearly the same figure. Like the beaver, it has two long, sharp, and strong cutting teeth in each jaw. Independent of its quills, which are short, and almost concealed among the hair, it has, like the beaver, a double fur, the first consisting of long soft hairs, and the second of a down still more soft. When the animal is young, the quills are proportionally larger, and more apparent, and the hairs are shorter and thinner than in the adults.

This animal avoids all kinds of moisture. He retires and deposits his excrements under the roots of hollow trees\*. He sleeps much, and feeds chiefly on the bark of the juniper bushes. In winter, the snow serves him for drink; and, in summer, he drinks water, which he laps like a dog. The savages eat his flesh, and clothe themselves with his fur, after depriving it of the quills and bristles.

\* See Edwards, Hist. of Birds, p. 52.