

The PHALANGER, or SURINAM
OPOSSUM*.

THE male and female phalanger, which were transmitted to us under the appellation of *Surinam rats*, are much less allied to the rats, than the animals whose history we have given under the name of *marmoset*, or murine opossum, and *cayopolin* or Mexican opossum. We have rejected the denomination of *Surinam rats*, because it is both compounded and ill applied. As the animal is mentioned by no traveller or naturalist, we have called it the *phalanger*, because its phalanges are very singularly

* Opossum with a thick nose, short ears covered with hair, eight cutting teeth in the upper jaw, and two in the lower. The hair on the upper part of the body is reddish, mixed with light ash colour and yellow. The hind part of the head, and middle of the back, are marked with a black line. The chest, belly, legs, and part of the tail, are of a dirty yellowish white. The rest of the tail is brown and yellow. The body of the female is marked with white. The first and second toes of the hind feet are closely united. The claws are large. The thumb on the hind feet is distinct. The bottom of the tail is covered with hair for near two inches and a half; the rest of it is naked. The length of the animal, from nose to tail, is near nine inches, and that of the tail ten; Pennant's *Synops. of Zool.* p. 209.

Phalanger ex rufo luteus in dorso, in ventre ex flavo albicans, capite crasso; Brisson, *Zool.* p. 213. Seb. *Mus. tom. i.* p. 50. tab. 31. fig. 8. Klein, *Zool.* p. 58.

constructed,

PLATE CCXXX.



PHALANGER.



PLATE CCXXI.



FEMALE PHALANGER.

constructed, and because the two first toes of the fore feet are attached to each other, as far as the end of the last phalanx. The thumb is separated from the other toes, and has no claw. This last character is not peculiar; for the Virginian and murine opossums have the same kind of thumb, but none of them have united phalanges.

These animals seem to vary among themselves, as appears from the figures of the male and female. They are of the size of a small rabbit, or of a very large rat, and are remarkable for the excessive length of their tail, the prolongation of their muzzle, and the form of their teeth, which alone would be sufficient to distinguish them from the murine and Virginian opossums, the rats, and every other species of quadrupeds.