

The BOBAK*, and other MARMOTS.

THE hamster has been called the *Strasbourg marmot*, and the bobak the *Polish marmot*. But it is equally certain that the hamster is not a marmot, as it is probable that the bobak does belong to that species; for the bobak differs from the Alpine marmot only in the colour of his hair, which, instead of brown, is a pale yellow. He has also a thumb, or rather a claw on the fore feet; while the marmot has only four toes and no thumb. In every other article, the resemblance is perfect; from which it is to be presumed, that these two animals are not distinct species. The same observation applies to the *monax*, or *marmot of Canada*, which by some travellers has been called the *wabissler*. He seems to differ from the marmot only by the tail, which is longer, and more bushy. Hence the *monax* of Canada, the bobak of Poland, and the Alpine marmot, appear to be the same animal, which, from the influence of different cli-

* *Bobak*; the Polish name of this animal.
Bobak; *Russkoye, Hist. Nat. Pol. p. 233. Idem Aust. p. 327.*

† *Cis flavicans capite rufescente. . . . Marmota Polonica; Brisson, Regn. Anim. p. 165.*

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mates, have undergone the varieties formerly mentioned. As this species prefers the coldest and most mountainous regions, and as it is found in Poland, Russia, and other parts of the North of Europe, it is not surprising that it should likewise be found in Canada, where it is only smaller*. Neither is this circumstance peculiar to the marmot; for all the animals common to both Continents are smaller in the New than in the Old World.

The Siberian animal, which the Russians call *jevrafckka*, is a species of marmot still smaller than the Canadian *monax*. It has a round head, and a blunt nose. It has no external ears, and the auditory passages can only be discovered by removing the hair. The length of the body, including the head, exceeds not a foot; and the tail, which is round near the body, then flat, and truncated at the extremity, is but three inches long. The body of this animal is pretty thick, the hair is yellow, mixed with gray, and that on the end of the tail is almost black. The legs are short, those before being somewhat longer than those behind. The hind feet have five toes and five black claws, which are a little crooked; and the fore feet have only four. When these animals are irritated, or attempted to be

* The Alpine and Polish marmots are a foot and a half long from the extremity of the muzzle to the origin of the tail; but the *monax*, or Canadian marmot, exceeds not fourteen or fifteen inches in length.

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seized,

seized, they bite violently, and set up a sharp cry like the marmot. When they eat, they sit on their buttocks, and carry the victuals to their mouths with the fore paws. They come in season in spring, and bring forth in summer. The litter is generally five or six. They dig holes in the earth, where they pass the winter, and where the female brings forth and suckles her young. Though they have a great resemblance to the marmot, yet they appear to be of a different species; for, in the same parts of Siberia, there are genuine Polish or Alpine marmots, which the natives call *sirok**; and it has never been remarked that the two kinds mix, or produce an intermediate race.

* Voyage de Gmelin, tom. ii. p. 444. — In Tartary, says Rubroquis, there are plenty of marmots, which are called *sirok*. In winter they assemble together, to the number of twenty or thirty, in a large hole, where they sleep during six months. *Voyage en Tartarie*, p. 25.

Plate CCXXIV.



BOBAK.