

The SERVAL*, or MOUNTAIN
CAT.

THIS animal, which lived several years in the royal menagery, appears to be the same with that described by the Gentlemen of the Academy under the name of *chat-pard*; and we should, perhaps, have been still ignorant of its real name, if the Marquis de Montmirail had not discovered it in an Italian book, of which he sent us the following passage in our own language: "The *maraput*," says P. Vincent-Marie, "which the Portuguese in India call *serval*, is a ferocious animal, larger than a wild cat, and somewhat less than the civet; from which list he differs, by having a rounder and larger head, and a kind of depression on the middle of the front. He resembles the panther in the colour of his hair, which is yellow on the head, back, and flanks, and white on the belly; and likewise in the spots, which are distinctly distributed, and a little smaller than those of the panther. His eyes are extremely bril-

* The name which the Portuguese have given to this animal. The natives of Malabar call it *maraput*.
Chat-pard; *Mém. pour servir à l'Hist. des Animaux*, part. 1, p. 109.

Voyage du Père F. Vincent-Marie de Sainte Catharine de Sieme, p. 409.

liant. His whiskers are long and stiff; his tail is short; and his feet are armed with long hooked claws. He inhabits the mountains of India. He is seldom seen on the ground, but remains always on the trees, where he makes his nest, and seizes birds, which constitute his chief nourishment. He leaps from tree to tree as nimbly as a monkey, and with such address and agility, that he runs through a considerable space in an instant, and may be said only to appear and disappear. He is extremely fierce, and yet he flies the aspect of man, unless when provoked, and particularly when his dwelling is injured: He then becomes furious, darts upon the offender, and bites and tears nearly in the same manner as the panther.

Neither captivity, nor good or bad treatment, can soften the ferocity of this animal. The one we saw at the menagery was always prepared to dart upon those who approached him; and we were obliged to draw and describe him through the grate of his apartment. He was fed with flesh like the panthers and leopards.

This serval or maraputa of Malabar and India*, appeared to be the same animal with the tiger-cat of Senegal and the Cape of Good Hope,

* At Sagari, an island in the Ganges, there are tiger-cats as large as a weasel; *Nouv. Voyage par le Sieur Laitier*, p. 90.

which, according to the testimony of travellers †, resembles the cat in its figure, and the tiger (that is, the panther or leopard) by the black and white spots of its hair. 'This serval,' they remark, 'is four times larger than a cat. He is very voracious, and eats apes, rats, and other animals.'

From comparing the serval with the *chat-pard*, or mountain cat described by the Gentlemen of the Academy, we discovered no other differences than the long spots on the back, and the annulated tail of the former, which were wanting in the latter. The spots on the back of the serval are only placed nearer each other than on the rest of the body. But these differences are too slight to create any suspicion concerning the identity of the species of these two animals.

† Voyage de Le Maire, p. 100.—The wood cat or tiger-cat is the largest of all the wild cats in the Cape. He lives in the woods, and is spotted nearly in the same manner as the tiger. The skins of these animals are excellent furs both for warmth and ornament, and they bring a good price at the Cape; *Descript. de Cap de Bonne-Espérance, par Kolbe, tom. iii. p. 50.*

Plate CXXXVII.



SERVAL.