

The LEMING, or LAPLAND
MARMOT*.

OLAUS MAGNUS is the first who mentions the leming. All that Gefner, Scalliger, Ziegler, Johnston, &c. have said concerning it, is borrowed from this author. But Wormius, after the most accurate researches,

* Lapland marmot, with two very long cutting teeth in each jaw; head pointed; long whiskers; six of the hairs on each side longer and stronger than the rest; eyes small and black; mouth small; upper lip divided; ears small, blunt, and reclining backwards; fore-legs very short; four slender toes on the fore-feet, covered with hairs; and, in the place of the thumb, a sharp claw, like a cock's spur; five toes behind; tail about half an inch long, the body and head about five. The skin is very thin. The colour of the head and body is black and tawny, disposed in irregular blotches. The belly is white, tinged with yellow; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 274.

Leming is the Norwegian name of this animal, which we have adopted.

Lemmar vel lemmus; *Olai Magni, de Gest. Septent.* p. 358.

Leem vel lemmer; *Gesner, Quad.* p. 371.

Mus Norvegicus, vulgo leming; *Worm. Mus.* p. 322. 325. *Schoefer, Lapland.* p. 136. *Pomper, Norway, Stram. Sandner,* p. 154. *Rasi Syn. Quad.* p. 227.

Sable mice; *Phil. Trans. Abstrig.* vol. II. p. 875.

Cuniculus caudatus, auritus, ex flavo, rufo, et nigro variegatus; *Briffon. Quad.* p. 100.

Mus lemmus, cauda abbreviata, pedibus pentadactylis, coeepore fulvo nigro vario; *Linn. Syst. Nat.* p. 80.

Fial-mus, fabel-mus, *Joffis Lemmick; Faun. Suec. No.* 29.

has

has written a history of this animal, which he describes in the following manner: 'It has, he remarks, the figure of a mouse; but the tail is shorter, and the body about five inches long. The hair is fine, and spotted with various colours. The fore part of the head is black, and the hind part yellowish. The neck and shoulders are black. The rest of the body is reddish, and marked with small black spots of different figures, as far as the tail, which exceeds not half an inch in length, and is covered with blackish yellow hairs. Neither the figure, nor the order of the spots, are the same in every individual. Round the mouth there are several stiff hairs in the form of whiskers, of which six on each side are longer and stiffer than the rest. The opening of the mouth is small, and the upper lip is divided, as in the squirrels. From the upper jaw proceed two long, sharp, and somewhat crooked cutting teeth, the roots of which penetrate as far as the orbits of the eyes. Two similar teeth in the under jaw correspond with those above; and there are three grinders on each side, situated at a distance from the cutting teeth. The first of the grinders is large, and composed of four lobes, the second of three lobes, and the third is much smaller. Each of these three teeth has a separate socket, and they are placed in the palate, at a considerable distance from one another. The tongue is pretty large, and extends

' tends to the extremity of the cutting teeth.
' From the remains of herbs and straw found
' in its throat, we are inclined to think that it
' is a ruminating animal. The eyes are small
' and black, and the ears recline on the back.
' The fore-legs are very short, and the feet covered
' with hair, and armed with five sharp
' crooked claws; the middle one is very long,
' and the fifth is like a small thumb, or a cock's
' spur, and sometimes situated equally high on
' the leg. The whole belly is whitish, inclined
' to yellow,* &c.

These animals, though their body is thick, and their legs very short, fail not to run pretty quickly. They generally inhabit the mountains of Norway and Lapland; but, in particular years, they sometimes descend in such numbers*, that

* It has been remarked, that the lemmings appear not regularly every year, but at certain unforeseen periods, and in such numbers, that they spread every where, and cover the whole surface of the earth. . . . These small animals, instead of being afraid, or flying from passengers, are bold and obstinate, face those who attack them, and cry and yelp nearly in the same manner as small dogs. When attacked, they neither fear clubs nor halberds, but dart against those who strike them, outrageously biting, and fixing upon the weapons employed to kill them. These animals, it is singular, never enter the houses or huts to do mischief; but keep always concealed among the bushes and hillocks. They sometimes make war, and divide themselves into two armies along the lakes and meadows. . . . Their enemies are foxes and ermines, who devour great numbers of them. . . . Grass that has been eat down, and springs again, is said to kill them; and they

that the arrival of the lemmings is considered as a terrible scourge, the effects of which it is impossible to avoid. They make dreadful devastation in the fields, lay waste the gardens, ruin the crops, and leave nothing except what is shut up in houses, where they happily never enter. They bark nearly like small dogs. When struck at with a stick, they seize it so forcibly with their teeth, that they allow themselves to be carried to a considerable distance without quitting their hold. They dig holes in the earth, and make roads like the moles, in quest of roots. At particular times, they assemble together, and the whole die in company. They are very courageous, and defend themselves against other animals. It is not known from whence they come. The vulgar believe that they fall from the clouds along with the rain*.

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they seem likewise to commit suicide; for they are often found suspended on the branches of trees; and they probably throw themselves, in troops, into the waters, like the swallows; *Hist. de la Laponie, par Scheffer, p. 322.* Note, It would appear that the lemmings, like the rats, mutually destroy and eat one another, when pasture fails them; and that this is the reason why their destruction is as sudden as their multiplication.

* *Belliole quadrupes, lemmus vel lemmus dictus, magnitudine foveicis, pelle varia per tempestates et repentinos imbres—incompertam unde, an ex remotioribus insulis et vento delata, an ex nubibus succulentis nata delerantur. Id tamen compertum est, statim atque decidit, reperiri in visceribus herbe cruda nondum incoctæ. Hæc more locustarum in maximo examine cadentes omnia virentia destruant, et quæ morfu tantum attingerit emouerunt virentia; vivit hoc agmen donec non gustaverit herbam renatam. Conveniunt quoque gregatim quasi hirundines*

The male is generally larger than the female, and his black spots are also larger. Upon the renewal of the grass, they infallibly die. In fine weather they take to the water in vast multitudes; but, when a breeze of wind rises, they are all drowned. The number of these animals is so prodigious, that, when they die, the air is infected, and produces many diseases. They even seem to infect the plants which they gnaw; for the pasture then kills the cattle. The flesh of the leming is not good; and their skin, though the hair be fine, does not answer for making furs, because it is too thick.

evoluatur, sed stato tempore aut moriuntur scervatim cum hæc terra (ex quarum corruptione air fit pestilens, et afflicta incolæ vertigine et ictero), aut his bestijs dictis vulgariter *lekar*, vel *komelits*, consumuntur, unde iidem hermelini pinguefcunt; *Ol. Mag. Hist. Geog. Sept. pag. 142.*

THE SEA OTTER*.

THE *faricovienne*, (or sea otter,) says Thetvet, 'is found along the river Plata. It is of an amphibious nature, living more in

* Sea otter, with a black nose; upper jaw longer and broader than the lower; long white whiskers; irides hazel; ears small, erect, and conic. In each jaw there are four cutting teeth. The grinders are broad, adapted for breaking and comminuting crustaceous animals and shell fish. The skin is thick. The hair is long, thick, and excessively black and glossy, beneath which is a soft down. The colour sometimes varies to silvery. The legs are thick and short. The toes are covered with hair, and joined by a web. The hind-feet are exactly like those of a seal, and have a membrane skirting the outside of the exterior toe, like that of a goose. The length, from nose to tail, is four feet two inches. The tail is thirteen inches long, flat, fullest in the middle, and sharp pointed. The biggest of these animals weigh seventy or eighty pounds; *Pennant's Symp. of Zood. p. 241.*

Eyes, quæ et cariguibojia appellatur a Brasilienfibus; Marteg. Hist. Nat. Brasil. p. 234.

Lutra nigricans, cauda depressa et glabra; *Barrère Hist. de la Franc. Equin. p. 155.*

Lutra Brasilienfis; *Raill Symp. Zood. p. 189.*

Loutre ou cariguibojia; *DeJenarcbais, tom. iii. p. 306.*

Ganchi; *Gamille Oronoue, tom. iii. p. 239.*

Le faricovienne; *Buffon.*

Muñela lutris, plantis palmatis pilosis, cauda corpore quadruplo brevior; *Less. Syst. Nat. p. 66.*

Lutra atrî coloris, macula sub gutture flava; *Brisson. Zood. p. 203.*

Lutra marina, *Kalm; Nov. Com. Petrop. tom. ii. p. 367. tab. 16.*

Sea otter; *Hist. of Kamyschatka, p. 122. Muller's Voy. p. 57.*