

THE COUDOUS, or INDIAN ANTILOPE*.

THE class of ruminating quadrupeds is the most numerous, and the most diversified. It comprehends, as we have seen, a great number of species, and, perhaps, a still greater number of distinct races, or permanent varieties. Notwithstanding all our researches, and the laborious details into which we have been obliged to enter, we freely acknowledge that the subject is by no means exhausted, and that there still remain animals of considerable note which we know only by imperfect fragments, and are unable to ascertain the creatures to which they belong. For example, in the very large collection of horns preserved in the royal cabinet, as well

* The Indian antelope, with thick straight horns, marked with two prominent spiral ribs near two-thirds of their length, and smooth towards their end: Some are above two feet long. Those at the British Museum, with part of the skin adhering, are black. The colour of the hair, on the fragment of the head, is of a reddish brown, bounded on the cheeks by a dusky line beneath, of a pale brown; Pennant's *Synops. of Zood.* p. 26.

Antelope oryx; *Fallas, Mijel. ix. Spicil. 15.*

Nilgauz, or gray oxen; *Bernier, vol. iv. p. 47.*

Pacasse; *Voyage to Congo; Churchill's Collect. vol. i. p. 623.*

as in private museums, each of which, after much labour and investigation, we have referred to the animal to whom it belongs, except one, which, having neither ticket nor any other artificial mark of information, is absolutely unknown. This horn is very large, almost straight, and composed of a thick black substance. It is not solid, like that of the stag; but it is a hollow horn, filled with a bone or core, like the horns of oxen. A thick rib, raised about an inch, runs from the base to above the middle of the horn. Though the horn be straight, this prominent rib makes a spiral turn and a half in the inferior part, and is entirely effaced in the superior part, which terminates in a point. Upon the whole, this horn seems to have a greater relation to those of the buffalo than to any other. But we are ignorant of the name of the animal; and, it was not till lately, that, in searching different cabinets, we found, in that of M. Duplex, a fragment of a head with two similar horns, to which the following ticket was fixed: '*Horns of an animal somewhat like a horse, of a grayish colour, with a mane on the fore part of the head like a horse. It is called here (at Pondicherry) Coesdoes, which should be pronounced Coudous.*' This small discovery gave us great joy. We could not, however, find the name *coesdoes* or *coudous*, in the writings of any voyager. We learned from

the ticket alone, that this animal is very large, and that he is a native of the warmest countries of Asia. The buffalo belongs to the same climate, and has also a mane on the top of his head. His horns, it is true, are crooked and flat, while those under consideration are round and straight, which, as well as the colour, sufficiently distinguishes these two animals; for the skin and the hair of the buffalo are black, and, according to the ticket, the hair of the coudous is grayish. These relations suggested others: The travellers into Asia mention large buffaloes of Bengal, reddish buffaloes, and grayish buffaloes of the Mogul empire*, called *nil-gauts*. The coudous is perhaps one or other of these animals. From the travellers into Africa, where the buffaloes are as common as in Asia, we have more pointed information with regard to a species of buffalo called *pacasse* in Congo, which seems to be the coudous: 'Upon the route from Louanda to the kingdom of Congo, we perceived † two pacasses, which are animals resembling buffaloes, and roar like lions. The male and female go always in company. They are white, with red and black spots. Their ears are

* In the hunting of the nil-gauts or gray oxen, which, in my opinion, are a species of elk, there is nothing particular, &c.; *Voyage de Bernier*, tom. ii. p. 245.

† Relation de Congo par les P. P. Michel-Ange de Galline et Denis de Charly de Plaisance, Capécins, p. 77.

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' half an ell long, and their horns are entirely straight. When they see any person, they neither fly nor do any harm, but stare at the passengers.' We formerly remarked that the animal called *empacassa* or *pacassa*, in Congo*, appeared to be the buffalo. It is in fact a species of buffalo, differing from him only in the figure of the horns and colour of the hair. In a word, the pacassa is the coudous, which perhaps constitutes a different species from that of the buffalo, and perhaps is only a variety of it.

* The country of Congo produces another animal which the natives call *empacassa*. Some people think it is the buffalo, and others that it has only a great resemblance to that animal. The editor of Lopes's account tells us, that it is not so large as a buffalo, but that it resembles him in the head and neck. — Dapper assures us, that the buffalo is called *empacassa* in the kingdom of Congo, and that its hair is red, and its horns black; *Hist. Gen. des Voyages*, tom. v. p. 81.