

third on the belly. On the flanks are transverse bands from the back to the belly. The tail is gray, with a yellow spot in the middle. The legs are barred with gray and brown. This is the most beautiful of all wolves, and its skin should be esteemed for its variety of colours*. But nothing indicates it to be a different species from the common kind, which varies from gray to white, from white to black, and a mixture of both, without changing its species: And we learn from Fernandes, that these wolves of New Spain vary like the European wolf; for, even in this country, they are not all marked according to our description, some of them being of a uniform colour, and even totally white†.

* It might be supposed, on account of the variety of colours, that the Mexican wolf is a lynx, which, like the wolf, is found in both Continents. But a bare inspection of the figure given by Recchi will show, that it has a perfect resemblance to the wolf, and none at all to the lynx.

† Cuetlachilli, seu lepus Indicus Jo. Fahri. Xolotlscintilli. Forma, colore, moribus, et mole corporis lupo nostrati similis est, atque adeo ejus (ut mihi quidam videtur) speciei, sed ampliori capite. Tauros vero sicut et nostras lupos aggreditur, et interdum etiam homines; reperiantur nonnulli candentes. — Vivit in calidis Novæ Hispaniæ locis; *Fernand. Hist. Anim. Nov. Hisp.* p. 7.

XIV.

THE ALCO.

WE formerly remarked, that, in Peru and Mexico, before the arrival of the Europeans, there were domestic animals called *alco*, which were nearly of the same size and dispositions with our small dogs; and that, from this conformity, and because they were equally faithful and attached to their masters, the Spaniards gave them the name of *Mexican* or *Peruvian dogs*. The species of these animals, indeed, seems not to differ essentially from that of the dog. Besides, the word *alco* might, perhaps, be a generic and not a specific term. Recchi has left us a figure of one of these alcos, which, in the Mexican language, was called *yazcuinte porzollí*. It was prodigiously fat, and probably degraded by its domestic state, and by too much nourishment. The head is represented to be so small that it has no proportion to the size of the body. Its ears are pendulous, which is another mark of slavery. The muzzle resembles that of a dog; the fore part of the head is white, and the ears are pretty yellow. The neck is so short, that there is no interval between the head

and shoulders. The back is arched, and covered with yellow hair. The tail is white, short, and pendulous, and descends no lower than the thighs. The belly is large, tense, and marked with black spots. It has six conspicuous paps. The legs and feet are white; and the toes, like those of the dog, are armed with long sharp claws*. Fabri, who gives this description, concludes, after a long dissertation, that this animal is the same with the *alco*; and I believe his conclusion is well founded. But this appellation must not be regarded as exclusive; for there is another race of dogs in America to which it applies with equal propriety. Beside the dogs, Fernandes remarks, which the Spaniards transported from Europe to America, there are three other species, which are pretty similar to ours, both in their nature and dispositions; neither is their figure altogether different. The first and largest of these American dogs is called *xoloistcuintli*. He is often three cubits long; and, what is remarkable, he is totally destitute of hair, and only covered with a soft close skin, marked with yellow and blue spots. The second is covered with hair, and of the size of our small Maltese dogs. He is marked with

* Ytzcuinte porzotli. Canis Mexicana.—Ad ungues animal quod hic prolat, natum, pingue, et mansuetum effigiem mihi videtur illud esse quod Americani nomine communi alco vocabant; Hernand. Hist. Mex. p. 466. et 478. fig. p. 466.

but

white,

white, black, and yellow. His deformity, though singular, is not disagreeable: His back is arched; and his neck so short, that his head seems to proceed immediately from the shoulders. He is named in his own country *micnuacanens*. The third, which likewise resembles our small dogs, is called *tecbichi*. But he has a wild and melancholy aspect. The Americans eat his flesh*.

From comparing the testimonies of Fabri and Fernandes, it is obvious, that the second dog, which this last author calls *micnuacanens*, is the same with the *ytzcuinte porzotli*, and that this species of animal existed in America before the arrival of the Europeans; and the same must have been the case with the *tecbichi*. I am persuaded, therefore, that the word *alco* was a generic name, which applied equally to both, and perhaps to other races or varieties that we are unacquainted with. But, as to the first, Fernandes seems to have been deceived both with regard to the name and the animal. No author mentions naked dogs in New Spain. This race, commonly called *Turkish dogs*, come from India, and other warm climates of the Old Continent; and, it is probable, that those seen in America by Fernandes, had been transported thither, especially as he mentions his having seen this kind in Spain, before his departure for America. The proof is still farther corroborated

* Fernand. Hist. Anim. Nov. Hisp. p. 6. cap. 20. et p. 10. cap. 21.

rated by the circumstance of this animal's having no American name: Fernandes gives it the borrowed one of *xoloitscuintli*, which is the name of the Mexican wolf. Thus, of these three species or varieties of American dogs, there remain only two, which are called indiscriminately *alco*; for, independent of the fat *alco*, which served as a lap-dog to the Peruvian ladies, there was a meager and melancholy *alco*, which was employed in the chase; and, it is by no means impossible, that the three races, apparently different from those of our dogs, spring from the same stock. The dogs of Lapland, Siberia, Iceland, &c. must have passed, like the foxes and wolves, from the one Continent to the other, and degenerated by the influence of the climate and a domestic state. The first *alco*, with the short neck, approaches the Iceland dog; and the *techichi* of New Spain is, perhaps, the same animal with the *koupara**, or *crab-dog* of Guiana, which in figure resembles the fox, and in hair the jackal. He has been called the *crab-dog*, because he chiefly lives upon crabs and other crustaceous animals. I have seen only one skin of this Guiana animal; and I am unable to determine whether it is a particular species, or whether it should be referred to those of the dog, fox, or jackal.

* *Canes ferus, major, canescens, vulgo dictus koupara*; Barreire, *Franc. Equin.* p. 147.

XV.

The TAYRA, GALERA, or GUINEY WEASEL*.

THIS animal, of which Mr. Brown has given a figure and description, is of the size of a small rabbit, and has a considerable resemblance to the weasel or martin. He digs an habitation in the earth, and has great strength in his fore-feet, which are much shorter than those behind. His muzzle is long, a little sharp, and garnished with whiskers. The under jaw is much shorter than the upper. He has six cutting and two canine teeth in each jaw, without reckoning the grinders. His tongue is rough, like that of the cat. His head is oblong, as well as the eyes, which last are placed at an equal distance between the ears and the point of the muzzle. His ears

* Guinea weasel, with the upper jaw much longer than the lower; eyes placed midway between the ears and tip of the nose; ears like the human; tongue rough; tail declining downwards, lessening towards the point; feet strong, and formed for digging; shape of the body like that of the rat; size of a small rabbit; of a dusky colour; the hair rough; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 225.

Galera subfusca, cauda elongata, auribus subnullis appressis; Brown's *Hist. of Jamaica*, p. 485. tab. 49.