

The MARMOT of Kamtschatka.

THE Russian travellers have discovered an animal in Kamtschatka, which they have called a *marmot*, but of which they have given us a very slight intimation only. They tell us, that its skin resembles, at a distance, the variegated plumage of a beautiful bird; that, like the squirrel, it uses its fore-feet in eating; and that it feeds on roots, berries, and cedar-nuts. It is worthy of remark, that the expression *cedar-nuts* presents a false idea; for the true cedar bears cones, and other trees, called by the name of cedars, bear berries.

The MARMOT of the Cape of Good Hope.

WE owe the first notices of this animal to M. Allamand, a learned naturalist and professor at Leyden. M. Pallas has described it under the name of *Cavia Capensis*, and M. Vofmaer under that of the *Boissard African Marmot*. Both have given a figure of it from the same plate, of which M. Allamand has sent me a copy.

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In writing on this subject to M. Daubenton, he remarks:

‘ I send you the figure of a species of cabiai, (I know no other name to give it), which I received from the Cape of Good Hope. It is not so well drawn as I could wish; but, as I have the animal stuffed in my cabinet, if you are inclined, I shall transmit it to you by the first opportunity.’

We accepted not this obliging offer of M. Allamand, because we were soon after informed, that one or two of these animals had arrived in Holland alive, and hoped that some naturalist would furnish us with an exact description. Both M. Pallas and M. Vofmaer have accordingly described this animal, and I shall here give extracts from their remarks:

“ This animal,” says M. Vofmaer, “ is known at the Cape of Good Hope, under the name of the *Rock Badger*, probably because it lives among rocks, and under the earth, like the badger; to which, however, it has no resemblance. It has a greater affinity to the marmot, and yet it differs considerably from that animal. . . . Kolbe is the first who mentions this animal, and he says, that it resembles the marmot more than the badger.”

We shall adopt the name of the *Marmot of the Cape*, in preference to that of the *cavia*, because it differs from the *cavia* or *cabiai* in many respects: 1. In the climate, the *cavia* being an animal

animal of South America, while the other is found in Africa only. 2. Because *cavia* is a Brazilian word, and ought not to be transported into Africa, since it belongs to the true *cavia*, and to the *cavia-cobaia*, or Guinea-pig. Lastly, because the *cabiai* inhabits only the margins of waters, and has membranes between its toes; but the marmot of the Cape lives among rocks, and in dry grounds, which it can dig with its claws.

"The first animal of this species," says M. Vosmaer, "that appeared in Europe, was sent by M. Tulbagh to the Prince of Orange, and its skin is still preserved in his cabinet. The colour of the first differed greatly from that of another which arrived afterwards: It was very young and very small. That which I am about to describe was a male, and was sent me by M. Bergmeyer of Amsterdam. . . . The life of this animal, according to my information, is very melancholy; for it slept much during the voyage. Its motion is slow, and performed by leaps. But, perhaps, in a natural state, it is equally active as the rabbit. Its cries were frequent, but short, sharp, and piercing."

I shall observe in passing, that this character brings the animal still closer to the marmot; for the Alpine marmots often make a sharp whistling noise.

"In Holland," continues M. Vosmaer, "they feed this marmot with bread and different kinds of pot-herbs. It is probable that this animal brings

brings forth often, and in great numbers. The form of their feet indicates that they are destined for digging the earth. The present marmot having died at Amsterdam, I gave it for dissection to M. Pallas.

"In stature it resembles the common rabbit, but it is thicker and more collected. The belly is peculiarly gross; the eyes are beautiful, and of an ordinary size. The eye-brows, both above and below, are garnished with some short black hairs, above which there are five or six hairs of the same colour, but long, that turn back toward the head. It has similar whiskers on the upper lip, about the middle of the muzzle.

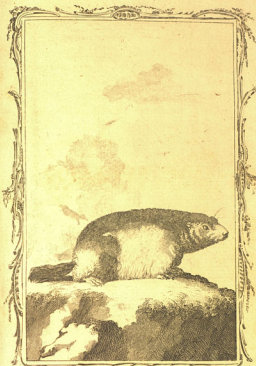
"The nose is black, naked, and divided by a fine suture, which descends to the lip. The nostrils resemble a cord broken through the middle. Under the muzzle, on the throat and cheeks, are some long, rude, black hairs; and hairs of the same kind are scattered over the whole body. In the palate there are eight deep furrows; the tongue is very thick, tolerably long, garnished with small papillae, and oval at the point. In the upper jaw, there are two strong teeth, which protrude over the under jaw, and are considerably distant from each other, having a kind of triangular appearance. In the under jaw, it has four close cutting teeth, which are very broad, long, and flat. The grinders, of which it has four on each side, are also large; and a fifth of a smaller size may be added to the number.

Its

Its fore-legs are short, and half covered with the skin of the body. The feet are black and naked. Those before have four toes; the middle one is longest; and the exterior one is shorter, and seems to adhere to the third. The toes are armed with round short claws, which adhere to the skin like the human nails. There are three toes on the hind-feet; the middle one only is furnished with a crooked claw, and the exterior toe is shorter than the others. The animal leaps on its hind-legs, like the rabbit. It has not the smallest vestige of a tail. The colour of the hair is gray, or a yellowish brown, nearly like that of a wild rabbit; but it is deeper upon the head and back; and the breast and belly are whitish. There is also a whitish belt upon the neck and near the shoulders. This belt forms not a collar, but terminates at the top of the fore-legs. In general, the hair is soft and woolly."

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

Platô C.



A. Hall Knapp

ALPINE MARMOT.



MONAX or MARMOT of CANADA.



A. Bell's design.

MARMOT of the CAPE of GOOD HOPE.