

THE GUINEY PIG*.

THIS little animal, though a native of Brasil and of Guiney, lives and propagates in the temperate, and even in the cold climates, when protected from the inclemency of the seasons. Though Guinea-pigs multiply prodigiously in France, their numbers are never great; because the care they require is not compensated by the profits arising from them. Their skin is hardly of any value, and their flesh, though eatable, is

* The *rylesii* cavy has two cutting teeth in each jaw; generally four toes on the fore-feet, and three behind, short ears, and so tail, or a very short one: The upper lip is half divided; the ears are very large, broad, and rounded at the sides: The hair is erect, and not unlike that of a young pig: The colour is white, or white variegated with orange and black, in irregular blotches; Pennant's *Synops. of Zood.* p. 243.

In Brasil, it is called *Cavia Cobaya*; in German, *Indianisch Kinele*, *Indisch Seile*, *Marr-ferchel*, *Marr-Schwein*; in Swedish, *Morfygn*; in Polish, *Swinia Zamorska*.

Cavia Cobaya; *Pijon, Hist. Nat.* p. 102.

Cuniculus Indus; *Göfuer, Icon. Zood.* p. 106.

Mus, seu cuniculus Americanus et Guineensis, porcelli pilis et voce, *Cavia Cobaya Brasiliensis dictus*; *Ray, Synops. Zood.* p. 223.

Mus porcellus, cauda nulla, palmis tetradactylis, plantis tri-dactylis; *Lin. Syst.* p. 79.

Cavia Cobaya Brasiliensis, quibusdam mus Pharonis, tata pilosus, porcellus, mus Indicus; *Klein. Zood.* p. 49.

Cuniculus ecaudatus, auritus, albus aut rufus, aut ex utroque variegatus; *Cuniculus Indicus*; *Briffon. Regn. Anim.* p. 147.

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not so good as to be much demanded; but it might be improved, by keeping them in warrens, where they would have the benefit of fresh air, and the liberty of choosing herbs agreeable to their taste. Those kept in houses have nearly the same bad taste with warren-rabbits; and those kept in gardens during summer have an insipid, but less disagreeable flavour.

The temperament of these animals is so hot and premature, that they copulate five or six weeks after their birth. They acquire not, however, their full growth before the 8th or 9th month. But this increase of size consists only of fat; for the solid parts are fully unfolded before the age of six months. The females go with young only three weeks; and I have known them bring forth at the age of two months. The first litter consists of four or five; the second of five or six; and the succeeding ones of seven or eight, and sometimes of ten or twelve. The mother suckles her young twelve or fifteen days; she banishes them as soon as she receives the male, which happens, at farthest, three weeks after her delivery; and, if any of them persist in following her, they are maltreated and slain by the father. Thus these animals produce at least every two months; and, as their young bring forth in the same space, we are astonished at their rapid and numerous multiplication. From a single couple we may have 1000 in one year. But their destruction is as rapid as their propagation. They are

are killed by cold and by moisture; they allow themselves, without resistance, to be eaten by the cats; even the mothers defend not their young from their destroyers; not having time to form an attachment to their young, they make no efforts to save them. The males are still less solicitous about their offspring, and even allow themselves to be devoured, without resistance. They seem to have no distinct sentiment, but that of love. When under the influence of this passion, they are susceptible of anger, fight cruelly, and even kill each other in disputing the possession of a female. They pass their lives in sleeping, eating, and amours. Their sleep is short but frequent; they eat every hour, both day and night, and they indulge in mutual embraces as often as they eat. Though perpetually throwing out urine, they never drink. They feed on all kinds of herbs, but especially on parsley, which they prefer to grain or to bread. They are likewise fond of apples and other fruits. They eat precipitantly, like the rabbit, little at a time, but very often. They make a kind of grunting noise, similar to that of a young pig. A kind of chirping noise marks the time of their amours, and they raise a sharp cry when they feel pain. They are extremely delicate, and so impatient of cold, that it is difficult to preserve them through the winter. They must be kept in a dry, warm, wholesome place. When they feel cold, they assemble and crowd close together; and they often

Plate LXXXVII.



GUINEY PIG.

all perish in this situation. By nature they are gentle and tame. They do no mischief; but they are equally incapable of good; for they never form any attachments. Mild by constitution, docile through weakness, almost insensible to every object, they have the appearance of living machines constructed for the purposes of propagation, and of representing a species.