

The DORMOUSE, or SLEEPER *.

THE dormouse is the least ugly of all the rats. It has brilliant eyes, and a bushy tail, which is rather fair than red. It never lives in houses, and seldom in gardens; but, like the fat squirrel, frequents the woods, and dwells in the hollows of old trees. The species is by no means so numerous as that of the garden squirrel. The dormouse is always found alone in its hole; and there is a considerable difficulty in procuring specimens of them. It appears, however, that they are pretty frequent in Italy, and that they exist in northern climates; for Linnæus mentions them in his list of Swedish animals †. But they seem not to inhabit Britain; for Mr. Ray ‡, who had seen them in Italy, says, that the *little sleeping rat* of England is not red on the back, like that of Italy, and that perhaps it is a different species. In France, it is the same as in Italy, and

* The squirrel with round naked ears; full black eyes; body of a tawny red; throat white; size of a mouse, but plumper; tail two inches and a half long, and pretty hairy, especially towards the end; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.*

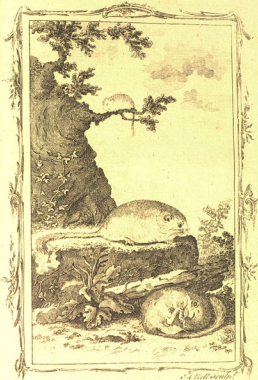
Mus avellanarum minor; *Ald. Quad.* p. 440. Ray, *Synops. Quad.* p. 220.

Mus avellanarius, cauda elongata pilosa, corpore rufo, gula albicante, pollicibus pollicis muticis; *Linn. Syst.* p. 83.

Glis sapra rufus, infra albicans; *Brissou. Regn. Anim.* p. 162.

† Faun. Suec. p. 11. ‡ Ray, *Synops. Quad.* p. 220.

Plate XCVIII.



DORMOUSE.

is very well described by Aldrovandus *. But he tells us, that there are two species in Italy; the one is rare, and has the smell of musk; the other is common, and has no particular odour; and that, at Bologna, they are both called dormice, because of their resemblance in figure and size. We know only the second of these species; for our dormouse has no smell, either good or bad. Like the garden squirrel, it wants the fatty follicles which invest the intestines of the fat squirrel, never becomes so fat, and, though its flesh has no disagreeable odour, it makes not good eating.

Like the fat and garden squirrels, the dormouse rolls itself up and sleeps in winter, revives in mild weather, and amasses nuts and dry fruits. It makes its nest upon trees, like the common squirrel, but generally lower, between the branches of hazels, or brushwood. The nest, which consists of interwoven herbs, is about six inches diameter, and is open above only. I have been assured by many countrymen, that they have found these nests in cut woods, and in hedges; that they are surrounded with moss and leaves; and that, in each nest, there were three or four young. When they grow large, they abandon the nests, and harbour in the hollows or under the trunks of old trees, where they repose, amass provisions, and sleep during the winter.

* Aldrovand. Hist. Quad. Digit. p. 440.