

' pretty long, but of a different form from that
' of the squirrel; and all the hair, both on the
' body and tail, is very soft.'

MADAGASCAR RAT.

IN the figure is represented a small animal from Madagascar, which was drawn alive, when in the possession of the Countess of Marfan. It appeared to make a nearer approach to the species of the palm squirrel than to that of the rat; for I was assured that it frequented the palm-trees. I have not been able to procure farther information concerning this animal. It may be remarked, however, that, as its claws did not project, it seemed to constitute a species very different from that of the rat, and to approach nearer to the palm-squirrel. To this animal may be referred the rat on the south-west coast of Madagascar, mentioned by the Dutch voyagers; for they tell us, that these rats live in the palm-trees, and eat the dates; that their body is long, their muzzle sharp, their legs short, and their tail long and spotted*. These characters correspond so well with those represented in the figure of our Madagascar rat, as to induce us

* Recueil des Voyages qui ont servi à l'Etablissement de la Compagnie des Indes Orientales, tom. i. p. 413.

Plate CCCL



MADAGASCAR RAT.

to believe that the animal formerly mentioned belongs to this species.

It lived several years with the Countess of Marfan. Its movements were extremely brisk, and its cry was nearly similar to that of the squirrel, though much weaker. Like the squirrels, it carried its food to its mouth with the fore paws, erected its tail, and leaped about. It bit desperately, and could not be tamed. It was fed with almonds and fruits. It never came out of its cage, except in the night; and it endured the winters very well in an apartment where the cold was moderated by a small fire.