

## THE GENET\*.

THE genet is a smaller animal than the civets. It has a long body, short legs, a sharp muzzle, a slender head, smooth, soft hair of a shining grayish ash-colour, marked with black spots, which are round and detached on the sides, but unite so closely on the back, that they seem to form continued black bars, stretching along the body. Upon the neck and spine, there is a kind of mane or long hair, forming a black bar from the head to the tail, which last is as long as the body, and marked with seven or eight alternately black and white rings. The black spots on the neck are also in the form of bars; and under each eye there is a very conspicuous white spot. Under the tail, and in the

\* The ears of the genet are a little pointed; the body is slender, and the tail very long. The colour of the body is a tawny red, spotted with black, and the ridge of the back is marked with a black line. The tail is annulated with black and tawny, and the feet are black. Sometimes the ground colour of the hair inclines to gray. It is about the size of a martin, but the fur is shorter; Pennant.

La Genetta; *Belon*, *Obj.* p. 73.

Genetta; *Cygnor. Hist. Zood.* p. 549.

Genetta, vel Ginetta; *Rail Synops. Zood.* p. 201.

Viverra genetta, cauda annulata, corpore fulvo nigricante maculata; *Linn. Syst. Nat.* p. 65.

Mustela cauda ex annulis alternatim albidis et nigris variegata.

Genetta, La Genette; *Briffon. Règ. Anim.* p. 252.

Coati, genetta Hispania; *Nolin. Zood.* p. 73.

fame

fame situation as in the civets, the genet has an aperture or sac, in which is secreted a kind of perfume; but it is weak, and soon loses its odour. The genet is longer than the martin, to which it has a great resemblance in figure, manners, and dispositions. But the genet seems to be more easily tamed. Belon tells us, that he saw genets in the houses of Constantinople, which were as tame as cats, and allowed to run about, without doing any kind of mischief; and that they are called *Constantinople cats*, *Spanish cats*, or *genet cats*. They have nothing, however, in common with cats, but the art of watching and catching mice. It is, perhaps, because they are found only in Spain and the Levant, that they have obtained the names of these countries; for the word *genet* is not derived from the ancient languages, and is probably a new name, taken from some place frequented by the genet, which we know is very common in Spain, where a certain race of horses are called *genets*. Naturalists pretend, that the genets inhabit only moist places, and the neighbourhood of brooks; and that they are never found in mountains or dry grounds. Their species is not numerous, or at least much diffused. There are none in France\*, or in any other province of Europe, except Spain and Turkey. Hence, for their subsistence and multiplication, they require a warm climate; yet none of them appear to be found in the

\* See the Supplement, p. 256.

warm

warm countries of Africa and India; for the fossane, which is called the *Madagascar genet*, is a different species, and shall afterwards be described.

The skin of this animal makes a light and handsome fur. Genet muffs were very fashionable some years ago, and gave a high price. But, since we learned the art of counterfeiting them, by painting with black spots the skin of the gray rabbit, their price has fallen three-fourths, and the mode has changed.

### S U P P L E M E N T.

I Remarked, under the article *genet*, that the species was not widely diffused, and that there were none of them in France, nor in any other province of Europe, except Spain and Turkey\*. I had not then learned that genets were found in our southern provinces, and that they are very common in Poitou, where they are known by the name of *genets*, even to the peasants, who assure us, that these animals inhabit only moist places and the banks of rivulets †.

The Abbé Roubaud, author of the *Gazette d'Agriculture*, and several other useful works, was the first who announced to the public the existence of this animal as a native of France.

\* See above, p. 255.

† Extrait des Affiches du Poitou, du Jeudi, 10 Février 1774.

In

In the month of April 1775, he sent me a genet which he had killed at Livray in Poitou, and which, except some variations in the colour of the hair, was the same with the Spanish genet. This animal is likewise found in the neighbouring provinces.

‘For these thirty years that I have lived in the province of Rouergue,’ says M. Delpeche, ‘it has been a constant practice among our peasants to bring dead genets every winter to a certain merchant of this place, who told me that they were not numerous, but that they live in the neighbourhood of Villefranche, and burrow, during the winter, in holes, like rabbits. If necessary, I can send you some dead specimens of this creature\*.’

We have given a figure of a female genet, which differs so much from the female formerly represented, as to merit a particular description. It was shown at the fair of St. Germain in the year 1772. It was fierce, and endeavoured to bite. It was kept in a narrow roundish cage, which rendered it difficult to be drawn. It was fed with flesh, and had the physiognomy, and all the principal characters of the genet formerly represented. The head was long and slender; the muzzle was also long, and advanced beyond the under jaw. The eye was large, with a narrow pupil. The ears were round; and the hair of the head and body was spotted. The tail was

\* Lettre de M. Delpeche, Maître des Arts, à M. de Buffon.

long and bushy. This animal was somewhat thicker than the former. The latter, indeed, was young, for it grew considerably larger in three or four months: We could not learn from what country it had been brought: The keeper had purchased it, seven or eight months before, in London. It was in perpetual motion, never resting, except during the time it slept.

The genet now under consideration was twenty inches long, and seven inches and a half high. The upper part of the neck was more bushy than that of the former genet, whose hair was all of an equal length. The circular bars on the tail are less distinct, and, indeed, extend not farther than about one third part of the tail. The whiskers are black, and much longer, being two inches seven lines long, and lie upon the cheeks, instead of being erect, as in the cats and tigers. The nose is black, and the nostrils very much arched. Above the nose there is a black line, which extends to between the eyes, and is accompanied by two white bands. Above the eyes there is a white spot, and a white band below them. The ears are black, but longer and narrower at the base than those of the first genet. The hair of the body is of a whitish gray colour, mixed with large black hairs, which, being reflected, seem to form a kind of black undulations. The upper part of the back is striped and spotted with black; the rest of the body is marked in the same manner, but the black is fainter.

Plate CXXI.



GENET.



FRENCH GENET.



*C. A. Bell's design.*

FRENCH GENET.

The belly is white, and the legs and thighs black. The paws are short; and there are five toes on each foot. The claws are white and crooked. The tail is sixteen inches long, and about two inches thick at the origin; the upper third part of the tail is of the colour of the body, and marked with black rings, which are very ill defined. The other two thirds of it are black.