

the armadillos are still better food, except the nine-banded armadillo, which has a strong smell of musk; that, after the armadillos, the paca is the best game, because its flesh is wholesome and fat: The next in order are the agouti and akouchi. They likewise maintain, that the red cougar is used as food, and that its flesh has the taste of veal.

## XVIII.

## The TUCAN, or MEXICAN SHREW\*.

FERNANDES has given the name of *tucan* to a small quadruped of New Spain, whose size, figure, and natural habits, make it approach nearer to the mole than to any other species. It appears to be the same animal described by Seba under the denomination of the *red mole* of America†; at least, the descriptions of the two

\* Mexican shrew, with a sharp nose; small round ears; without sight; two long fore teeth above and below; thick, fat, fleshy body, short legs, so that the belly almost touches the ground; long crooked claws; tawny hair; short tail; length from nose to tail, nine inches; Pennant's *Synops. of Quad.* p. 310.

† Seba, vol. i. p. 51. tab. 32. fig. 2.

authors correspond sufficiently to justify this conjecture. The tucan is perhaps somewhat larger than our mole. It is equally fat and fleshy, and its legs are so short that the belly touches the ground. The tail is short; the ears are small and round; and the eyes are so minute that they can scarcely be of any use to the animal. But it differs from the mole in the colour of the hair, which is reddish yellow, and in the number of toes, having only three before and four behind, while the mole has five toes on all the feet. It seems to differ from the mole in other articles: Its flesh is good eating. It possesses not the instinct of discovering its retreat after having once left it, but, at every time, is obliged to dig a new hole; so that, in certain soils, which are agreeable to these animals\*, the holes are so numerous, and so near each other, that circumspection is necessary to walk there with safety.

\* Fernand. Hist. Anim. Nov. Hisp. p. 9. cap. 24.

## XIX.

## The BRASILIAN SHREW\*.

WE mention this animal under the denomination of the *Brasilian shrew*; because we are ignorant of its proper name, and it has a greater resemblance to the shrew than to any other animal. It is, however, considerably larger, being about five inches long from the extremity of the muzzle to the origin of the tail, which is not two inches, and, consequently, is proportionally shorter than that of the common shrew. It has a pointed muzzle, and very sharp teeth. Upon a brown ground-colour, three pretty large black bands extend longitudinally from the head to the tail, under which the scrotum appears hanging between the hind feet. This animal, says Marcgrave, sports with the cats, who discover no inclination to eat it. In the same manner, the cats kill the European shrews, but never eat them.

\* *Brasilian shrew*, with a sharp nose and teeth; pendulous scrotum. It is of a dusky colour, marked along the back with three broad black strokes. The length from nose to tail, five inches; that of the tail two; Pennant's *Synops. of Zool.* p. 309.

*Mus araneus figura muris*; *Marcgr. Brasili.* p. 229.