

THE WOLF*.

THE wolf is one of those animals whose carnivorous appetite is excessively strong. Though he has received from Nature the means of gratifying this taste, though she has bestowed on him arms, craftiness, strength, agility, and every thing necessary for discovering, seizing, conquering, and devouring his prey; yet he often dies of hunger; because men have declared war against him, put a price on his head, and forced him to fly to the forests, where he finds only a few species of wild animals, who escape from him by the swiftness of their course, and whom he cannot sur prise but by chance, or by a patient,

* The wolf is ranked in the same genus with the dog by Linnaeus, and by Mr. Pennant; the latter of whom describes him in the following manner: 'Wolf—Dog with a long head, pointed nose, ears erect and sharp, tail long, bushy, and bending down; teeth large; colour generally pale brown, tinged with yellow; sometimes found white, and sometimes black; taller than a large grey-hound.'

In Greek, *λύκος*; in Latin, *Lupus*; in Italian, *Lupo*; in Spanish, *Lobo*; in German, *WOLF*; in Swedish, *Ulf*; in Polish, *Wilk*; in French, *Le Loup*.

Lupus; *Glossar. Icon. Animal. Quad.* p. 79.

Lupus; *Ray, Synops. Animal. Quad.* p. 173.

Canis, canis incurvatus; *Linn. Syst.* 58.

Canis ex grisco flavescens; *Brisson. Quad.* p. 255.

Lupus vulgaris; *Klein, Hist. Nat. Quad.* p. 70.

and

and often fruitless attendance at those places to which they generally resort. He is naturally clownish and dastardly; but want makes him ingenious, and necessity gives him courage. When pressed with famine, he braves danger; he attacks those animals which are under the protection of man, especially such as he can transport with ease, as lambs, small dogs, and kids; and, when successful in his bloody expeditions, he returns often to the charge, till, being wounded, chased, and maltreated by men and dogs, he retires, during the day, to his den; but issues forth in the night, traverses the country, roams about the cottages, kills all the animals which have been left without, digs the earth under the doors, enters with a dreadful ferocity, and puts every living creature to death, before he chooses to depart, and carry off his prey. When these inroads happen to be fruitless, he returns to the woods, searches about with avidity, follows the track of wild beasts, and pursues them in the hope that they may be stopped and seized by some other wolf, and that he may be a partaker of the spoil. In fine, when his hunger is extreme, he loses the idea of fear; he attacks women and children, and even sometimes darts upon men, till, becoming perfectly furious by excessive exertions, he generally falls a sacrifice to pure rage and distraction.

The wolf, both externally and internally, has so strong a resemblance to the dog, that he seems

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to have been formed upon the same model. But he exhibits the same characters under a mask. The figure is similar; but the result is directly reversed. Their natural dispositions are so opposite, that they are not only incompatible, but repugnant by Nature, and inimical by instinct. A young dog trembles at the first glance of a wolf. The odour of the wolf, though new and unknown, excites such an aversion in the dog, that he flies, and comes quivering to the feet of his master. A mastiff, who knows his own strength, though terrified at the appearance of a wolf, attacks him with courage, endeavours to put him to flight, and exerts every effort to get rid of an odious object. They never meet, but either flight or death is the consequence. When the wolf is strongest, he mangles and devours his prey. The dog, with more generosity, contents himself with victory; he finds no savory odour in the body of a dead enemy, but abandons him to be food for the ravens, and even to other wolves; for wolves eat the carcases of each other, and, when one is much wounded, the others follow the blood, and assemble in troops to dispatch him.

The dog, even when wild, is not a fierce animal. He is easily tamed, and attaches himself with fidelity to his master. The young wolf may also be tamed; but he feels no attachments; Nature in him is too powerful for education; With age he resumes his ferocious character, and
returns,

returns, with the first opportunity, to his savage state. Dogs, even those of the most clownish race, love to associate with other animals, and are naturally disposed to accompany them: It is by instinct alone, and not by education, that they know how to conduct and guard the flocks. The wolf, on the contrary, is an enemy to all society, and keeps no company even with those of his own species. When several wolves appear together, it is not a society of peace, but of war; it is attended with tumult and dreadful prowlings, and indicates an attack upon some large animal, as a stag, an ox, or a formidable mastiff. This military expedition is no sooner finished, than they separate, and each returns in silence to his solitude. There is even little intercourse between the males and females: They feel the mutual attractions of love but once a year, and never remain long together. The females come in season in winter: Many males follow the same female; and this association is more bloody than the former; for they growl, chase, fight, and tear one another, and often sacrifice him that is preferred by the female. The female commonly flies a long time, fatigues her admirers, and retires, while they sleep, with the most alert or most favourite male.

The season of love continues only twelve or fifteen days; it commences with the oldest females; the young ones are not so early disposed. The males have no marked period, but are

equally ready at all times. They go from female to female, according as they are in a condition to receive the male: They begin with the old females about the end of December, and finish with the young ones in the month of February or beginning of March. The time of gestation is about three months and a half*; and young whelps are found from the end of April to the month of July. This difference in the time of gestation between the she-wolf, who carries 100 days, and the bitch, who carries only 60 days, proves that the wolf and dog differ as much in their constitutions, and particularly in one of the chief functions of the animal œconomy, as they do in their tempers. Thus, the wolf and dog have never been regarded as the same animal but by the nomenclators of natural history, who being acquainted with the surface of Nature only, never extend their views beyond their own methods, which are always deceitful, and often erroneous, even in the most obvious facts. The dog and wolf cannot copulate, or produce an intermediate race†. Their dispositions are opposite, and their constitutions different. The wolf lives much longer than the dog; the former brings forth but once a year, and the latter twice or thrice. These distinctions are more than sufficient to demonstrate the two animals to be of very different kinds. Besides, upon a

* See *Nouveau Traité de Venerie*, p. 75.

† See article Dog.

closer

closer examination, we easily perceive, that, even externally, the wolf differs from the dog by essential and uniform characters. The appearance of the head and form of the bones are by no means the same. The cavity of the eye in the wolf is placed obliquely; the orbits are inclined; the eyes sparkle, and shine in the dark; instead of barking, he howls; his movements, though quick and precipitate, are more equal and uniform; his body is stronger, but not so flexible*; his members are firmer, his jaws and teeth larger, and his hair coarser and thicker.

But these animals have a great resemblance in their internal structure. The wolves copulate like the dogs, and have an osseous penis, surrounded with a ring, which swells and hinders them from separating. When the females are about to bring forth, they search for a concealed place in the inmost recesses of the forest. After fixing on the spot, they make it smooth and plain for a considerable space, by cutting and tearing up with their teeth all the brambles and brush-wood. They then bring great quantities of moss, and prepare a commodious bed for their young, which are generally five or six, though sometimes they bring forth seven, eight, and even nine, but never less than three. They come into the world blind, like the dogs; the mother

* Aristotle tells us, that the neck of the wolf consists of one continued bone. But this is a mistake; for the wolf's neck is composed of vertebrae, and is equally flexible as that of a dog.

suckles

suckles them some weeks, and soon learns them to eat flesh, which she prepares for them by tearing it into small pieces. Some time after, she brings them field-mice, young hares, partridges, and living fowls. The young wolves begin by playing with these animals, and at last worry them; then the mother pulls off the feathers, tears them in pieces, and gives a part to each of her young. They never leave their den till the end of six weeks or two months. They then follow their mother, who leads them to drink in the hollow trunk of a tree, or in some neighbouring pool. She conducts them back to the den, or, when any danger is apprehended, obliges them to conceal themselves elsewhere. Though, like other females, the she-wolf is naturally more timid than the male; yet, when her young are attacked, she defends them with intrepidity; she loses all sense of danger, and becomes perfectly furious. She never leaves them till their education is finished, till they are so strong as to need no assistance or protection, and have acquired talents fit for rapine, which generally happens ten or twelve months after their first teeth, which commonly fall out in the sixth month*, are replaced.

Both males and females are capable of generating at the age of two years. The females, it is probable, like those of other species, are sooner mature for this operation than the males. It is

* See la Venerie de du Pouilloux, p. 100.

certain,

certain, however, that they never come in season before the second winter after birth, which implies 18 or 20 months. A she-wolf, which I brought up, discovered no marks of love till the third winter, or more than two years and a half. We are assured by hunters*, that, in every litter, there are more males than females; which confirms the general remark, that, in every species, the number of males exceeds that of the females. They likewise tell us, that some males attach themselves to the females, after the season of love is over, and accompany them till they are about to bring forth; that then the female steals off, and anxiously conceals her young, lest the father should devour them immediately after birth; but that, when brought forth, he takes an affection for them, supplies them with food, and, if deprived of their mother, provides for and protects them himself. These facts, however, have the air of fiction, and seem contrary to the natural dispositions of the wolf.

Wolves acquire their full growth at the end of two or three years, and live 15 or 20 years. This fact accords with what we have already remarked concerning many other species, that the time of growth is the seventh part of the total duration of life. When old, wolves turn whitish, and their teeth are much worn. When full, or fatigued, they sleep, but more during the day than the night, and it is always a kind of

* See le Nouveau Traité de la Venerie, p. 276.

slight

slight slumber. They drink often; and, in the time of drought, when there is no water in the hollows, or in the trunks of old trees, they repair, several times in a day, to the brooks or rivulets. Though extremely voracious, if supplied with water, they can pass four or five days without meat.

The wolf has great strength, especially in the anterior parts of the body, in the muscles of the neck and jaws. He carries a sheep in his mouth, and, at the same time, outruns the shepherds; so that he can only be stopped or deprived of his prey by dogs. His bite is cruel, and always more obstinate in proportion to the smallness of the resistance; for, when an animal can defend itself, he is cautious and circumspect. He never fights but from necessity, and not from motives of courage. When wounded with a ball, he cries; and yet, when dispatching him with bludgeons, he complains not. He is harder, less sensible, and more robust than the dog. He runs and roams about whole days and nights; and, of all animals, he is perhaps the most difficult to conquer in the chase. The dog is gentle and courageous; the wolf, though ferocious, is timid. When he falls into a snare, he is so overcome with terror, that he may be either killed or taken alive, without resistance. He allows himself to be chained, muzzled, and led where you please, without exhibiting the least symptom of resentment or discontent. The senses of the
wolf

wolf are excellent, but particularly his sense of smelling, which often extends farther than his eye. The odour of carrion strikes him at the distance of more than a league. He likewise scents live animals very far, and hunts them a long time by following their track. When he issues from the wood, he never loses the wind. He stops upon the borders of the forest, smells on all sides, and receives the emanations of living or dead animals brought to him from a distance by the wind. Though he prefers living to dead animals, yet he devours the most putrid carcases. He is fond of human flesh, and, were he stronger, he would perhaps eat no other. Wolves have been known to follow armies, to come in troops to the field of battle, where bodies are carelessly interred, to tear them up, and to devour them with an insatiable avidity: And, when once accustomed to human flesh, these wolves ever after attack men, prefer the shepherd to the flock, devour women, and carry off children. Wolves of this vicious disposition are distinguished by the name of *Loups garoux**, or wolves that should be guarded against.

Whole countries are sometimes obliged to arm, in order to destroy the wolves. Princes have particular equipages for this species of hunting, which is both useful and necessary. Hunters distinguish wolves into *young, old, and very old*. They are known by the tracks of their feet.

* See la Chasse du Loup de Gailon Phébus.

The older the wolf, his feet are the larger. The she-wolf's feet are longer and more slender; her heel is also smaller, and her toes thinner. A good blood-hound is necessary for hunting the wolf; and, when he falls into the scent, he must be coaxed and encouraged; for all dogs have an aversion to the wolf, and proceed with coldness in the chase. When the wolf is raised, the grey-hounds are let loose in pairs, and one is kept for dislodging him, if he gets under cover; the other dogs are kept as a reserve. The first pair are let after the wolf, and are supported by a man on horse-back; then the second pair are let loose at the distance of seven or eight hundred paces; and, lastly, the third pair, when the other dogs begin to join and tease the wolf. The whole together soon reduce him to the last extremity; and the hunters complete the business by stabbing him with a dagger. The dogs have such a reluctance to the wolf's flesh, that it must be prepared and seasoned, before they will eat it. The wolf may also be hunted with beagles or hounds; but, as he darts always straight forward, and runs for a whole day without stopping, the chase is irksome, unless the beagles be supported by grey-hounds, to tease him, and give the hounds time to come up.

In the country, though men, attended with mastiffs, beat the bushes, lay snares and baits, dig pits, and scatter poisoned pieces of meat; yet the number of these destructive animals never decreases,

decreases, especially in woody countries. The British pretend to have cleared their island of this rapacious creature; and yet I am assured that wolves still exist in Scotland*. As there is little wood in the southern parts of Britain, it was a more easy task to extirpate the wolf.

The hair and colour of these animals vary with the climate, and sometimes even in the same country. In France and Germany, beside the common wolves, we find some with thicker and more yellow-coloured hair. These wolves, more wild, though less destructive, than the other kind, never trouble the flocks or the habitations of men, and live solely by hunting. In the northern countries, we meet with some wolves which are entirely white, and others entirely black; and the latter are larger and stronger than the former. The common species are very generally diffused: They are found in Asia †, Africa ‡, and America §, as well as in Europe. The wolves of Senegal || resemble those of France; but they are larger and more rapacious. The wolves of Egypt ** are smaller than those of Greece. In the East, and particularly in Persia, wolves are ex-

* See Supplement to this article.

† See *Le Voyage de Pietro della Valle*, vol. iv. p. 4.

‡ *Hist. Gen. des Voyages*, par M. l'Abbé Prevôt, tom. v. p. 85.

§ *Le Voyage du Le Clercq*, p. 483.

|| *Hist. Gen. des Voyages*, tom. iii. p. 285. *Voyage de le Maire aux Isles Canaries*, Cap Verd, &c. p. 100.

** *Arist. Hist. Animal.* lib. viii. cap. 28.

hibited as spectacles to the people. When young, they are taught to dance, or rather to perform a kind of wrestling with a number of men. Chardin tells us, that a wolf well educated in dancing, is sold at 500 French crowns. This fact proves, that these animals, by time and restraint, are susceptible of some kind of education. I have brought up several of them. When young, or during their first year, they are very docile, and even caressing; and, if well fed, they neither disturb the poultry, nor any other animal. But, at the age of 18 months or two years, their natural ferocity returns, and they must be chained, to prevent them from running off, and doing mischief. I reared one till the age of 18 or 19 months, in a court along with fowls, none of which he ever attacked; but, for his first essay, he killed the whole in one night, without eating any of them. Another having broken his chain, run off, after killing a dog with whom he had lived in great familiarity. I kept a she-wolf three years in a large court; and, though shut up, when very young, along with a mastiff dog of the same age, she could never suffer him to approach even when she came in season. She provoked, she attacked, she bit the dog, who at first only defended himself, but at last he worried her.

There is nothing valuable in the wolf but his skin, which makes a warm durable fur. His

flesh

flesh is so bad that it is rejected with abhorrence by all other quadrupeds; and no animal but a wolf will voluntarily eat a wolf. The smell of his breath is exceedingly offensive. As, to appease hunger, he swallows indiscriminately every thing he can find, corrupted flesh, bones, hair, skins half tanned and covered with lime, he vomits frequently, and empties himself oftener than he fills. In fine, the wolf is consummately disagreeable; his aspect is base and savage, his voice dreadful, his odour insupportable, his disposition perverse, his manners ferocious; odious and destructive when living, and, when dead, he is almost perfectly useless.

S U P P L E M E N T.

IN the history of the wolf I remarked, that this animal was entirely extirpated in England. By way of recompense, it would appear, that these voracious creatures have found out new countries to inhabit. Pontoppidan alledges, that they existed not in Norway, before the year 1718. He says, that during the last war between Sweden and Norway, the wolves passed the

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mountains by following the provisions of the army*.

Some English authors, who treat of British zoology, have reproached me for maintaining that wolves still exist in the northern parts of their island. I never did affirm this as a fact, but only said †, that I was assured that wolves 'still existed in Scotland.' Lord Morton, then President of the Royal Society, a Scotsman worthy of the greatest credit and respect, and proprietor of large territories in that country, assured me of this fact in the year 1756. To his testimony I still adhere, because it is positive, and because the assertion of those who deny the fact, amounts to a negative evidence only ‡.

The Viscount of Querhüent, in his observations, tells us, that there are two species of wolves at the Cape of Good Hope, the one black, and the other gray with black spots. He adds, that

* PontepPIDAN'S Nat. Hist. of Norway.

† See above, p. 207.

‡ It is amusing to see the Count de Buffon, notwithstanding the repeated assurances he has had to the contrary, still maintaining that there are wolves in the North of Scotland. He appeals to the evidence of the late Earl of Morton. We are fully disposed to give due weight to an authority so respectable, and so worthy of credit. But we are convinced that the Count has misapprehended his Lordship; for it is universally known to the inhabitants of Scotland, that not a single wolf has been seen in any part of that country for more than a century past.

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they are stronger than those of Europe, and their skin is thicker, and their teeth more sanguinary; but that their dastardliness makes them less formidable, though, like the ounces, they sometimes, during the night, come into the streets of the city.