

NOTICES of some Animals which are not expressly treated of in the Course of this Work.

WE have now finished, according to the extent of our ability, the history of quadrupeds. But, to render it still more complete, those of which we could not procure an exact knowledge must not be passed over in silence. Their number is small; and even of this small number, several of them are only varieties of the species already described.

NOTICE I.

The WHITE, or POLAR BEAR*.

THE white bear is a famous animal in our most northern regions. It is mentioned by Martin, and some other voyagers. But none of

* Polar bear, with long head and neck; short round ears; end of the nose black; vast teeth; hair long, soft, white, and tinged in some parts with yellow; limbs of great size and strength.

Plate CCXCIV.



MICO or FAIR MONKEY

of their descriptions are so complete as to enable us to ascertain whether it differs in species from the common bear. If what they have said, however, be exact, it is probably a distinct species. But, as we know that the wolf varies in different climates, some of them being black, others brown, others white, and others variegated, colour is a character of no value in constituting different species. I saw two small bears which had been brought from Russia, and were entirely white*; and yet they were unquestionably of the same species with our Alpine bears. These animals likewise vary greatly in size. As they live long, and become very thick and fat in places where they have plenty of nourishment, and are not disturbed, the character drawn from magnitude is equivocal. Hence we are not authorised to conclude, that the bear of the northern seas is a peculiar species, solely because he

length. It grows to a vast size, the skins of some being thirteen feet long; *Pennant's Synops. of Zool.* p. 192.

White bear; *Martin's Spitzbergen*, p. 100. *Egede's Greenland*, p. 59. *Ellis's Voy.* p. 41. *Craux's Greenland*, vol. i. p. 73. *Borowicz's Voy.* p. 18 and 45. *La Hontan's Voy.* vol. i. p. 235. *Cutty's Carolina*, App. p. 26.

Ursus albus Martensii; *Klein. Zool.* p. 82.

L'Ours blanc; *Brisson. Zool.* p. 128.

* We find white land-bears not only in Russia, but in Poland, Siberia, and Tartary. The mountains of Great Tartary furnish vast numbers of white bears; *Relat. de Grande Tartarie*, p. 8. These mountain bears do not frequent the sea, and yet they are white. This colour, therefore, seems rather to proceed from the difference of climate than from that of the element inhabited by these animals.

is white and larger than the common kind*. The difference of habits seems not to be more decisive than that of colour and magnitude. The bear of the northern seas feeds upon fishes. He never quits the margins of the sea, and often inhabits the floating islands of ice. But, if we consider that the bear is an animal which eats every thing, that, when pressed with hunger, he has no choice, and that he is not afraid of water, these habits will not appear sufficient to form distinct species. The fish eaten by the sea-bears is rather a kind of flesh, being chiefly the carcasses of whales, walruses, and seals. The climate produces no other animals. Neither does it afford grain or fruits; and, consequently, the bear is under the necessity of subsisting on the productions of the sea. Is it not probable that our bears, if transported to the mountains of Spitzbergen, and finding no food upon land, would take to the sea in quest of subsistence?

Colour, size, and mode of living, being insufficient, no other essential characters remain but those which may be derived from figure. Now,

* *Ursus* in Polonia variat, maximus nigricans, minor fulvus, minimus argenteus, in consiliis Moschoviz pilis nigris et argentei coloris mixti. . . . ex Urso occiso pelvis detracta fere ad ulnas sex protendebatur in terra *Chelmugi*, altera in *Palatinate Brackwingi*, tertia ad ulnas quinque in *Boudargute* pago *Palatinatus Pomeraniæ*. . . . non raro ex *Lithuanis* advehantur *Gedanus* pelles octo pedum; *Reaczijski*, p. 322.—*Note*, This passage proves that there are white land-bears as large as those of the northern seas.

all that voyagers have said of the sea-bear amounts only to this, that his head, body, and hair are longer than those of our bear, and that his skull is much harder. If these differences were real and considerable, they would be sufficient to constitute a separate species. But I am not certain that Martin has examined with accuracy, and that the other writers who copied him have not exaggerated*. 'These white bears,' he remarks, 'are quite otherwise shaped than those that are seen in our country; they have a long head like unto a dog, and a long neck, and they bark like dogs that are hoarse, and all their whole body is much otherwise shaped than ours. They are slender in the body, and a great deal swifter;' *Martin's Voyage to Spitzbergen*, p. 100. This description furnishes the following remarks: 1. That the author does not make these bears larger than ours, and, consequently, that we ought to suspect the evidence of those who tell us that the sea-bear is sometimes thirteen feet in length †, 2. That hair as soft as wool is not a specific character; for, to render hair soft, and even more bushy, it is only necessary that an animal be frequently in the water, as appears from the land

* Anderson's *Hist. of Greenland*; and Ellis's *Voy. to Hudson's Bay*.

† A white bear, which had been killed, was brought aboard. Its skin was thirteen feet long; *Frégate Voyage des Hollandais, par le Nord*, p. 35.

and water beavers. The latter, who dwell oftener in the water than on land, have coarser and less bushy hair: And, I am inclined to think, that the other differences are neither real nor so conspicuous as Martin would have us to believe; for Dithmar Blesken, in his description of Iceland, mentions these bears, and assures us, that he saw one killed in Greenland, which raised itself on the two hind feet, like our bears; but he says not one word which indicates that the white bear of Greenland is not entirely similar to ours*. Besides, when these animals find prey on land, they never go to sea in quest of food. They devour rein-deer, and such other animals as they can seize. They even attack men, and never fail to dig up dead bodies†. But hunger, which they often feel in these desert and barren lands, obliges them to frequent the water, in quest of seals, young walruses, and

* Habet Islandia coloris albi ingentes Ursores . . . in Greenlandia ursum magnam et albam habuimus obviam, qui neque nos timebat neque nostro clamore abigi poterat, verum recta ad nos tanquam ad certam prædam costendebat, cumque propius nos accessisset, in bombardam trajectus, ibi demum erectus, posterioribus pedibus tanquam homo stabat donec tercio trajecteretur, atque ita exanimatus concidit; *Dithmar Blesken*, p. 64.

† The white bears live upon dead whales; and, in the neighbourhood of these carcases, they are most frequently found. They likewise devour men, when they can surprise them. If they scent the place where a dead body is interred, they remove the earth and stones, open the coffin, and eat the carcase; *Recueil des Voyages du Nord*, tom. II. p. 116.

hæc

whales.

whales. They take up their residence on islands of ice, on which they are often seen floating, and never abandon their station as long as they can find abundance of food. When these boards of ice are detached in the spring, the bears allow themselves to be carried along; and, as they cannot regain the land, or abandon the ice on which they are embarked, they often perish in the open sea. Those who arrive with the ice on the coasts of Iceland or Norway*, are starved to such a degree, that they devour every thing they meet, which may have given rise to the prejudice, that these sea-bears are more fierce and voracious than the common kind. Some authors tell us, that the sea-bears are amphibious like the seals, and that they can live as long as they please under water. But the contrary is evident from the manner of hunting them: They are incapable of swimming long, and never accomplish above a league at a time. They are followed by a small boat, and are soon worn out with fatigue. If they could dispense with respiration, they would dive to the bottom, in order to rest themselves. But, when they dive, it is only for a few seconds; and, for

* When the islands of ice separate from the north of Greenland, and are driven southward, the white bears dare not depart from them. When they arrive in Norway, or at any island, they are mad with hunger; and strange stories are told of the ravages made by these animals; *Recueil des Voyages du Nord*, tom. I. p. 100.

far

fear of drowning, they allow themselves to be killed on the surface of the water².

Seals are the common prey of the white bears†. But the walrus, from whom they sometimes carry off the young, pierces them with its tusks, and puts them to flight. The whale likewise overwhelms them by its weight, and banishes them from the places they frequent. They sometimes, however, devour the young whales. All bears are naturally very fat; and the white bears, which live upon animals loaded with grease, are fatter than the common kind. Their fat is very like that of the whale. The flesh of these bears is not bad, and their skin makes a very warm and durable fur‡.

* This white bear swam about a mile. We pursued him briskly with three boats; and, after he was fatigued, we killed him; *Trois Navigateurs des Hollandais du Nord, par Gerard de Verd, p. 110.*—They swim from one board of ice to another: When we pursued them in our boats, they dived at one end of the boat, and came up at the other. They likewise run very well upon land; *Recueil des Voyages du Nord, tom. II. p. 116.*—Upon the coast of Spitzbergen, a white bear took the water, and swam more than a league. We followed with our boats, and killed him, &c.; *Troisième Voyage des Hollandais, p. 34.*

† When we killed this white bear, his stomach was opened, in which we found entire pieces of the sea-dog, with the hair and skin on them, which shows that he had but lately devoured them; *Ibid. p. 36.*

‡ The white bears go in quest of wolves and sea-dogs, and prefer whales to every other fish. . . . They dread the whale, who hunts and pursues them from a natural antipathy, because they eat her young; *Recueil des Voy. du Nord, tom. I. p. 99.*—The skins of the white bears are of great use to those

S U P P L E M E N T.

I Here give a figure of the white sea-bear, from a drawing sent me by the late Mr. Colinson. If this drawing be exact, it is certain that the sea-bear is a different species from the land-bear. The head is so long, when compared with that of the common bear, that this character alone is sufficient to constitute a distinct species: And those voyagers adhere to truth when they tell us, that the figure of the sea-bear is totally different from ours, and that its head and neck are much longer. From the drawing it likewise appears, that the feet, instead of resembling the human hand, like those of the land-bear, are formed nearly like the feet of a large dog, and other carnivorous animals of this kind. Besides, from several relations, it appears, that some of these bears are much larger than the land-bear.

who travel in winter. They are dressed, even at Spitzbergen, by sleeping them in warm water, which extracts the grease; and they are afterwards dried. . . . Their grease is like suet, and, after being well melted, it becomes as clear as whale oil. It is generally burnt in lamps, and has not so bad a smell as fish oil. Our sailors kill it for whale oil. The flesh of these bears is fat and whitish.—Their milk is very white and fat; *Troisième Voy. des Hollandais, tom. II. p. 115.*

Gerard

Gerard de Veira asserts, that, after killing one of these bears, he measured the skin, and found it to be twenty-three feet long; which is more than triple the length of the common bear*. We likewise find, from the Collection of Voyages to the North, that these sea-bears are larger and more ferocious than ours. But, in the same Collection, it is said, that, though these bears are differently formed, and have the head and neck much longer, and the body more slender and agile, they are nearly of the same size with the common kind†.

All voyagers likewise agree, that the sea-bears have the bones of the head so hard, that no blow of a club, though sufficient to bring an ox to the ground, can stun them; and that their voice rather resembles the barking of an enraged dog than the deep murmuring cry of the common bear. Robert Lade assures us, that in the environs of the river Rupper, he killed two sea-bears of a prodigious size; that these famished and ferocious animals attacked the hunters with such impetuosity, that they killed several Savages, and wounded two Englishmen. In page 34, of the third Dutch Voyage to the North, we are told, that the sailors killed, on the coast of Nova Zembla, a sea-bear whose skin was thirteen feet long. Upon the whole, therefore, I

* *Trois Navigations admirables faites par les Hollandois au Septentrion*, p. 110.

† *Recueil des Voyages du Nord*, tom. ii. p. 115.

Plate CCXCV.



Abell sculp.

WHITE or POLAR BEAR.

am inclined to believe, that this animal, so much celebrated for its ferocity, is really a much larger species than our bear.

II.

The COW of TARTARY*.

M. GMELIN, in the New Memoirs of the Academy of Peterburgh, has given a description of a Tartarian cow, which, at first sight, appears to differ from all those we have enumerated under the article *buffalo*. 'This cow,' says he, 'which I saw alive, and had a drawing made of it in Siberia, came from Calmuck. It was about two and a half Russian ells in length.

* Grunting ox, with a mane on the neck; whole body covered with long hair, reaching almost to the ground; back busched; tail like that of a horse, covered with full white and long hairs, strikes with its head like a goat; is very unruly; found in the country of the Calmucks; Pennant's *Scotch. of Russ.* p. 5.

Vacca grunniens, villosa, cauda equina, Savioli; New. Com. Persp. tom. v. p. 339. Rubroqati Fey Harris's Coll. vol. i. p. 571.

Bos grunniens, cornibus teretibus, exteriorum curvatis, vellicere propendens, cauda undique jubata; Lenz. Syst. Nat. p. 99.

Le Boeuf vela; Le Beau. Fey. Myšov. tom. i. p. 120.

Bubul; Bull's Trav. vol. i. p. 224.

VOL. VIII.

P

' By