THE

YOUTH'S INSTRUCTOR,

IN

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE

YOUTH'S INSTRUCTER

IN

NATURAL HISTORY;

IN SEVEN NUMBERS.

No. 4.

NEW YORK:

1832

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

RARE BOOK COLLECTION

Fig. 147

ZEBRA

Fig. 148

HIPPOPOTAMUS

THE

YOUTH'S INSTRUCTER

IN

NATURAL HISTORY;

IN SIX NUMBERS.

EACH NO. CONTAINING TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS.

NEW-YORK:—E. BLISS.

1832.

G. L. Austin, printer.

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE ZEBRA, OR DOUW,

Is, perhaps, the handsomest and most elegantly clothed of all quadrupeds. He has the shape and graces of the horse, the swiftness of the stag, and a striped robe of black and white alternately disposed with so much regularity and symmetry, that it seems as if Nature had made use of the rule and compass to paint it. These alternate bands of black and white are so much the more singular, as they are straight, parallel, and very exactly divided, like a striped stuff; and as they, in other parts, extend themselves not only over the body, but over the head, the thighs, the legs, and even the ears and the tail; so that, at a distance, this animal appears as if he was surrounded with little fil-

lets, which some person had disposed, in a regular manner, over every part of the body. In the females, these bands are alternately black and white; in the male, they are brown and yellow, but always of a lively and brilliant mixture, upon a short, fine, and thick hair; the lustre of which still more increases the beauty of the colours. The Zebra is in general, less than the horse, and larger than the ass. The Zebra is chiefly found in the southern parts of Africa; and is often seen near the Cape of Good Hope.

THE HIPPOPOTAMUS.

Has a short, thick head, in proportion to the body. He has no horns, neither on the nose, like the rhinoceros, nor on the head, like ruminating animals. His cry, when hurt, approaches as near to the neighing of the horse, as the bellowing of the buffalo; The skin is in some parts two inches thick; and the Africans cut it into whip thongs,

which, in consequence of their softness and pliability, they prefer to those procured from the rhinoceros' hide.

The male Hippopotamus is about six feet nine inches long, from the extremity of the muzzle to the beginning of the tail; fifteen feet in circumference, and six feet and a half in height. His legs are about two feet ten inches long; the length of the head, three feet and a half, and eight feet and a half in circumference; and the width of the mouth, two feet four inches. It, however, sometimes acquires much greater magnitude. It has been erroneously stated, that he commonly moves slowly on the land; but, on the contrary, when he has been injured, he has been known to pursue persons for several hours, who escaped with great difficulty. He swims quicker than he runs, pursues the fish, and makes them his prey. He delights much in the water, and stays there as willingly as upon land; he remains a long time under water, and walks at the bottom as well as he does in the open air. When he quits it to graze upon land, he eats sugar-canes,

rushes, millet, rice, roots, &c. of which he consumes and destroys a great quantity, and does much injury to cultivated lands; but, as he is more timid upon land than in the water, he is very easily driven away; and, as his legs are short, he cannot save himself well by flight, if he is far from any water. His resource, when he finds himself in danger, is to plunge himself into the water, and go a great distance before he reappears. He commonly retreats from his pursuers; but if he is wounded, he becomes irritated, and immediately facing about with great fury, rushes against the boats, seizes them with his teeth, often tears pieces out of them, and sometimes sinks them under water.

THE WILD BOAR,

Which is the original of all the varieties we find in this creature, is by no means so stupid nor so filthy an animal as that we have reduced to tameness; he is much smal-

Fig. 29

WILD BOAR.

Fig. 28

BOAR.

ler than the tame hog, and does not vary in his colour as those of the domestic kind do, but is always found of an iron gray, inclining to black; his snout is much longer than that of the tame hog, and the ears are shorter, rounder, and black; of which colour are also the feet and the tail.

The tusks also of this animal are larger than in the tame breed, some of them being seen almost a foot long.

The wild boar can properly be called neither a solitary nor a gregarious animal. The three first years the whole litter follows the sow, and the family lives in a herd together. They are then called beasts of company, and unite their common forces against the invasions of the wolf, or the more formidable beasts of prey. Upon this their principal safety, while young, depends, for when attacked they give each other mutual assistance, calling to each other with a very loud and fierce note; the strongest face the danger; they form a ring, and the weakest fall into the centre. However, when the wild boar is come to a state of maturity, and when

conscious of his own superior strength, he then walks the forest alone and fearless. At that time he dreads no single creature, nor does he turn out of his way even for man himself.

This animal is therefore seldom attacked, but at a disadvantage, either by numbers, or when found sleeping by moon-light. The hunting the wild boar is one of the principal amusements of the nobility in those countries where it is to be found.

THE BOAR.

Of all quadrupeds, the Hog appears the most rough and unpolished. His voraciousness apparently depends on the continual necessity which he has to fill the vast capaciousness of his stomach. It is the roughness of the hair, the hardness of the skin, and the thickness of the fat, which render these animals so insensible to blows. Mice have been known to lodge in their backs,

and eat their fat and their skin, without their seeming sensible of it.

Their imperfection in the sense of touch is still more augmented by a distemper which is called the measles, and which renders them almost absolutely insensible. This disorder proceeds in general from the coarseness of their food; for the wild Boar, which usually lives on corn, fruits, acorns, and roots, is not subject to this distemper, any more than the young Pig whilst it sucks. This is only to be prevented by keeping the domestic Hog in a clean stable, and giving him plenty of wholesome food; by this means his flesh will become excellent to the taste, and the lard firm and brittle, if, as I have seen practised, he is kept for a fortnight or three weeks before he is killed, in a clean stable, without litter, giving him no other food than dry corn: for this purpose we should choose a Swine of about a year old, full of flesh and fat.

Voracious and uncleanly as he is, the Hog has some good qualities. If one of his own kind utters a cry of distress, every Hog with-

in hearing instantly hurries to his assistance. When teased by a dog, they have been known to hem him round, and kill him. If a male and female are brought up together when young, and the latter loses her companion, she begins immediately to decline, and probably dies of a broken heart.

That Hogs are not destitute of sagacity is proved by the long succession of learned Pigs which, for so many years, have been trained to astonish the multitude at fairs, and other places where numbers of persons are congregated.

THE BEAVER.

Of all quadrupeds, the Beaver alone has a flat oval tail, covered with scales, which serves as a rudder to direct its motions in the water. It is the only quadruped that has membranes between the toes on the hind feet, and at the same time none on the fore ones, which it uses as hands in carrying food to the mouth.

Fig. 94

BEAVER

Fig. 95

RACCOON

It is the only one which, while it resembles a terrestrial animal in its fore parts, seems to approach the nature of an aquatic being in its hind ones.

The Beavers begin to assemble in the month of June or July, in order to form a society, which is to continue for the greatest part of the year. They arrive in numbers from every side, and presently form a company of two or three hundred. The place of meeting is commonly the place where they fix their abode; and this is always by the side of some lake or river.

However numerous the republic of Beavers may be, peace and good order are uniformly maintained in it. A common series of toil has strengthened their union; the conveniences which they have procured for each other, and the abundance of provisions which, after having amassed, they continue to consume together, render them happy within themselves; and, having moderate appetites, entertaining even an aversion to blood and carnage, they have not the smallest propensity to hostility or rapine, but actually

enjoy all the blessings which man is only born to desire.

Independently of the fur, which is indeed the most valuable article furnished by the Beaver, this animal furnishes a substance that has been considerably used in medicine. This substance, which is known by the name of *castor*, is contained in two bladders. The savages, it is said, obtain an oil from the tail of the Beaver, which they employ as a topical remedy for different complaints. The flesh of this animal, though fat and delicate, is yet bitter, and disagreeable to the palate.

There are two kinds of hair on the skin of the beaver; that next the skin is short, and as fine as down; the upper coat is scantier, thicker, and longer.

The senses of the Beaver are very acute; and so delicate is its smell, that it will suffer no filth, no bad stench, to remain near it.

THE RACOON

Is an animal of about the same size as a

small badger; its body is short and bulky; its fur is fine, long, thick, blackish at the surface, and gray toward the bottom; its head like that of a fox, but its ears are round and shorter; its eyes are large, of a yellowish green, and over them there is a black and transverse stripe; its snout is sharp; its tail is thick, but tapering toward a point, and marked alternately from one end to the other with black and white and brownish rings, and is at least as long as the body; its fore legs are much shorter than the hind ones, and both are armed with five strong, sharp claws.

This animal, while eating, usually supports itself on its hind legs, and uses its paws to hold its food, and it can open an oyster with the utmost dexterity. If water be near, it in general dips its food into it. By its pointed claws it is enabled to climb trees with great facility. It runs up the trunk with the same swiftness that it moves over the plain, and frolicks about to the extremity of the branches with great security and ease: on the ground, indeed, it rather bounds than

runs, and its motions, though singularly oblique, are yet always quick and expeditious.

The Racoon is a native of most parts of North America; but it has never yet been found in the Old Continent. Buffon asserts that it is common in South America, but we believe it has never been found farther south than Mexico.

He may be tamed without difficulty, and is then very good-natured and sportive, but is as mischievous as a monkey, and seldom remains at rest. Of ill treatment he is extremely sensible, and never forgives those from whom he has received it. He has also an antipathy to sharp and harsh sounds, such as the bark of a dog and the cry of a child. His fur is used by the hatters, his skin is converted into gloves and upper leather for shoes, and his flesh is considered as a delicacy by the negroes.

Fig. 64

BADGER

Fig. 65

OTTER

THE BADGER

Is a lazy, distrustful, solitary animal, that retires far from the approach of man, and digs a subterraneous residence, where it spends, at least, three-fourths of its existence, and never ventures forth but in search of food.

The dogs easily overtake it when it is at any distance from its hole, and then, using all its strength, and all its powers of resistance, it throws itself upon its back, and defends itself with desperate resolution.

The young Badgers are easily tamed; they will play with young dogs, and like them, will follow any person whom they know, and from whom they receive their food; but the old ones, in spite of every effort, still remain wild.

These animals are naturally of a chilly temperament. Such as are reared in a house seem to be never more happy than when

near a fire. They are likewise very subject to the mange; and, unless carefully washed, the dogs that penetrate into their burrows, are seized with the same distemper.

The hair of the Badger is always filthy. Its flesh, when the animal is well fed, makes excellent hams and bacon; and of its skin are made coarse furs, collars for dogs, and trappings for horses. The hair is used for painter's brushes.

THE OTTER.

The Common Otter is of a deep brown colour, and is usually about two feet in length from the tip of the nose to the insertion of the tail; the head and nose are broad and flat; the mouth bears some similitude to that of a fish; the neck is short, and equal in thickness to the head; the body long: the tail broad at the insertion, but tapering off to a point, and about sixteen inches long; the eyes are very small, and placed nearer to

the nose than is customary in quadrupeds. The legs are very short, but remarkably strong, broad, and muscular, and so placed as to be capable of being brought into a line with the body, and performing the office of fins; and each foot is furnished with five toes, connected by strong broad webs, like those of waterfowl.

These voracious animals are generally found at the sides of lakes and rivers, but particularly the former, in which they destroy so much more than they devour, that they will sometimes spoil a pond in the space of a few nights. They do equal mischief by tearing in pieces the fisherman's nets, which they infallibly do, whenever they happen to get entangled in them. In forming its retreat the Otter displays great sagacity. It makes the entrance under water, burrows upwards, provides several cells to retire to in case of floods, and opens on the surface a small orifice for the admission of air, which orifice it contrives so as to be concealed by a thick bush.

If taken while young, the Otter may be

tamed and taught to fish for its master, and will become almost as affectionate and docile as the dog.

For the destruction which he makes among the finny tribe, and also the disturbance which he gives them in their haunts, the Otter is an object of abhorrence to the angler. Old Izaak Walton calls them "villanous vermin," and many other hard names, and declares that, in his judgment, "all men that keep Otter-dogs ought to have pensions from the king, to encourage them to destroy the breed of these base Otters."

THE CABIAI.

The Cabiai resembles a hog of about two years old, in the shape of its body, and the coarseness and colour of its hair. Like the hog, it has a thick short neck, and a rounded bristly back; like that animal, also, it is fond of the water and marshy places, brings forth many at a time, and feeds upon ani-

Fig 16

CABIAI

Fig. 160

BABIROUSSA

mal and vegetable food. But, when examined more nearly, the differences are many and obvious. The head is longer, the eyes are larger, and the snout instead of being rounded, as in the hog, is split like that of a rabbit or a hare, and furnished with thick strong whiskers; the mouth is not so wide, the number and the form of the teeth are different, for it is without tusks: like the peccary it wants a tail; and, unlike to all others of this kind, instead of a cloven hoof, it is in a manner web-footed, and thus entirely fitted for swimming, and living in the water. The hoofs before are divided into four parts; and those behind into three; between the divisions, there is a prolongation of the skin, so that the foot, when spread in swimming, can beat a greater surface of water.

The Cabiai even in a state of wildness, is of a gentle nature, and, when taken young, is easily tamed. It comes and goes at command, and even shows an attachment to its keeper. Its flesh is said to be fat and tender, but from the nature of its

food, it has a fishy taste, like that of all those which are bred in the water. Its head, however, is said to be excellent; and in this it resembles the beaver, whose foreparts taste like flesh, and the hinder like the fish it feeds on.

THE BARBIROUSSA.

All naturalists have regarded this animal as a kind of hog, though it has neither the head, shape, bristles, nor tail of a hog. Its legs are longer and its muzzle shorter. It is covered with soft and short hair like wool; and its tail, which tapers to a fine point, is terminated by a tuft of the same; its body is likewise not so thick and clumsy as that of the hog; its ears are short and pointed; its skin is black, and furrowed with wrinkles and creases; but the most remarkable character, and what distinguishes it from all other animals, are four enormous tusks, or canine teeth; the teeth, the two shortest of

which shoot out of the lower jaw, like those of the boar; the two others, which come from the upper jaw, pierce the cheeks, or rather the upper part of the lips, and rise crooked almost to the eyes. These tusks are of a very beautiful ivory, much smoother and finer, but not so hard as that of the elephant.

The Barbiroussa differs still more from the wild boar by its natural appetites. It feeds upon grass and leaves of trees, and does not endeavonr to enter gardens, to feed on beans, peas, and other vegetables; while the wild boar, who lives in the same country, feeds upon wild fruits, roots, and often on the depredations it makes in gardens. These animals, who go alike in herds, never mix: the wild boars keep on one side, and the Barbiroussas on the other: these walk quicker and have a very fine scent. They often fix themselves against a tree, to keep off the hunters and their dogs.

THE PORCUPINE.

THE Porcupine is about two feet long, and fifteen inches high. Like the hedgehog, it appears a mass of misshapen flesh, covered with quills, from ten to fourteen inches long, resembling the barrel of a goose-quill in thickness, but tapering and sharp at both ends. These, whether considered separately or together, afford sufficient subject to detain curiosity. Each quill is thickest in the middle; and inserted into the animal's skin, in the same manner as feathers are found to grow upon birds. All these quills incline backwards, like the bristles of a hog; but when the animal is irritated, they rise and stand upright, as bristles are seen to do.

The porcupine never attempts to bite, nor any way to injure its pursuers; if hunted by a dog or a wolf, it instantly climbs up a tree, and continues there until it has wearied out the patience of its adversary; the wolf knows by experience how fruitless it would be to

Fig. 162

PORCUPINE

164 *Fig.* *163*

TENDRAC COENDOU

wait; he therefore leaves the porcupine above, and seeks out for new adventure.

The porcupine does not escape so well from the Indian hunter, who eagerly pursues it, in order to make embroidery of its quills, and to eat its flesh. This, as we are commonly told, is very tolerable eating:—however we may expect wretched provisions when the savages are to be our caterers, for they eat every thing that has life.

As to the rest, there are many things related concerning this animal that are fabulous; but there are still many circumstances more that yet remain to be known.

THE TENDRAC.

The Tendrac is not larger than a rat; its muzzle and its ears are shorter than those of the Tanrec; which last is covered with shorter prickles, as numerous as those of the hedgehog; whereas the Tendrac has them only on the head, neck, and shoulders, the

rest of the body being covered with a coarse hair resembling the bristles of a hog.

These little animals, whose legs are small, move but slowly; they grunt like a hog, and wallow, like it, in mire; they are found chiefly in creeks and harbours of salt water; they multiply in great numbers, and make themselves holes in the ground, and sleep for several months. During this torpid state, their hair falls off, which is renewed upon their revival. They are usually very fat; and although their flesh be insipid, soft, and spongy, yet the Indians find it to their taste, and consider it as a very great delicacy.

THE COUENDO.

The Couendo is much less than the porcupine its head and muzzle is shorter; it has no tuft on its head, nor slit in the upper lip; its quills are somewhat shorter, and much finer; its tail is long, and that of the porcupine is very short; it is carnivorous, rather

113 Fig. 112

ZIBET GENET

Fig. 111

CIVET

than frugivorous, and endeavours to surprise birds, small animals, and poultry, while the porcupine only feeds upon herbs, greens, fruits, &c. It sleeps all the day, like the hedgehog, and only stirs out in the night; it climbs up trees, and hangs in the branches by its tail, which the porcupine cannot do. All travellers agree that its flesh is very good eating. It is easily tamed, and commonly lives in high places. These animals are found over all America, from Brazil and Guiana to Louisiana and the southern parts of Canada: while the porcupine is only to be found in the hottest parts of the Old Continent.

THE CIVET.

The Civet is from two to three feet in length, stands from ten to twelve inches high, and has a tail half the length of its body. The hair is long, and the ground colour of it is a brownish gray, interspersed with nu-

merous transverse interrupted bands or irregular spots of black. Along the centre of the back, from between the shoulders to the end of the tail, is a kind of mane, which can be erected or depressed as the animal pleases, and which is formed of black hairs, longer than those of the body. The sides of the neck and the upper lip are nearly white. The legs and the greater part of the tail are perfectly black; there is a large black patch round each eye, which passes thence to the corner of the mouth; and two or three bands of the same colour stretch obliquely from the base of the ears toward the shoulders and neck, the latter of which is marked with a black patch.

THE GENET

Is an animal smaller than the civets. It has a long body, short legs, a sharp snout, and a slender head. Its fur, which is exceedingly smooth and soft, is of an ash colour,

glossy, and marked with black stripes, which are separate upon the sides, but which unite upon the back. It has also upon the neck a kind of mane, or longish hair, which forms a black streak from the head to the tail, which last is as long as the body, and is marked with seven or eight rings, from the insertion to the tip, which are alternately black and white.

It is an animal somewhat larger than the martin, which it strongly resembles, not only in the form of the body, but also in disposition and habit, and from which it seems chiefly to differ in being more easily tamed. It is a native of Spain, Africa, and the south of Asia.

THE ZIBET.

The Zibet differs from the civet in having a body longer and less thick, a snout flatter, more slender, and somewhat concave at the upper part; its hair is much shorter and

softer; it has no mane, no black under the eyes, or upon the cheeks.

These animals have been called *Musk Cats*, or Civet Cats; yet they are not of the cat species; which, however, they resemble in some zoological points, and in their activity, and their predatory, sanguinary, and nocturnal habits. They somewhat resemble the fox, especially in the head. Their coat is diversified with stripes and spots; a circumstance which has occasioned them to be mistaken for small panthers, by persons who had only seen them at a distance. In every other respect, however, they differ from the panther.

THE ARMADILLO.

The Armadillo is chiefly an inhabitant of South America; a peaceful, harmless creature, incapable of offending any other quadruped, and furnished with a peculiar covering for its own defence. It appears at

Fig. 127

SIX BANDED ARMADILLA

Fig. 128

LONG TAILED ARMADILLA

first view, a round misshapen mass, with a long head, and a very large tail sticking out at either end, as if not a piece of the rest of the body. It is of different sizes, from a foot to three feet long, and covered with a shell divided into several pieces that lap over each other like the plaits in a coat of armour, or in the tail of a lobster.—The difference in the size of this animal, and also the different disposition and number of its plaits have been considered as constituting so many species, each marked with its own peculiar name. In all, however, the animal is partially covered with this natural coat of mail, the conformation of which affords one of the most striking curiosities in natural history. This shell, which in every respect resembles a bony substance, covers the head, the neck, the back, the sides, the rump, and the tail to the very point. The only parts to which it does not extend, are the throat, the breast, and the belly, which are covered with a white soft skin, somewhat resembling that of a fowl stripped of its feathers. The shell, which covers the upper part of the body, differs from

that of the tortoise in being composed of more pieces than one, which lie in bands over the body, and, as in the tail of the lobster, slide over each other, and are connected by a yellow membrane in the same manner. By this means the animal has a motion in its back, and the armour gives way to its necessary inflections. These bands are of various numbers and sizes, and from them these animals have been distinguished into various kinds.

The instant the armadillo perceives itself in the power of its enemies, it has but one last resource, to roll itself up, and thus patiently wait whatever tortures they think proper to inflict. The flesh of the smaller kinds is said to be delicate eating, so that we may suppose they receive no mercy.

THE PECAN.

This animal has been described by authors under many appellations. A conside-

190 Fig. 189

VISON FECAN

Fig. 191

CANADIAN OTTER

rable number of its skins are annually imported into England by the Hudson's Bay company. It is a larger and stronger animal than any variety of the pine martin, but it has similar manners; climbing trees with facility, and preying on mice. It inhabits a wide extent of country from Pennsylvania to Slave Lake. It is also found on the shores of the Pacific.

THE VISION.

This animal is found throughout a great extent of country from Carolina to Hudson's Bay, and in its habits and appearance resembles the otter. The favourite haunts of this species are the banks of streams, where it inhabits holes near the water. It is an excellent swimmer and diver, and feeds on frogs and fish. It also commits great depredations in the poultry-yard. When provoked, it ejects a fetid liquor, which is exceedingly unpleasant.

THE CANADIAN OTTER.

The Canada Otter resembles the European species in its habits and food, but it may be distinguished from it, by the fur of its belly being of the same shining brown as its back. It is a much larger animal, and has, in proportion, a shorter tail than the European one. In the winter season it frequents rapids and falls, to have the advantage of open water, and when its usual haunts are frozen over, it will travel to a great distance, through the snow, in search of a rapid which has resisted the severity of the weather. If it is seen, it throws itself on its belly, and slides through the snow for several yards, leaving a deep furrow behind it. This movement is made with great rapidity. When closely pressed, it will turn and defend itself with great obstinacy. It inhabits the Mackenzie and other rivers nearly to the Arctic Sea.

THE PACA.

Burrows like the rabbit, to which he has been compared, though there is scarcely any likeness between these two animals: he is much larger than the rabbit, and even than the hare; he has a round head, and the snout short; he is fat and bulky, and by the form of his body he is more like a pig, as well as by grunting, waddling, and the manner of eating; for he does not use, as the rabbit does, his fore feet to carry food to his mouth; but grubs up the earth like the hog, to find his subsistence. The colour of the back is dark brown, or liver-coloured; but is lighter on the sides, which are beautifully marked with lines of white spots, running in parallel directions from its throat to its rump; those on the upper part of the body are perfectly distinct; the belly is white. Its head is large; its ears short and naked; its eyes full, and placed high in its head, near the ears; it has two strong yellow cutting

teeth in each jaw; its mouth is small; its upper lip divided; and it has long whiskers on its lips, and on each side of its head, under the ears. Its legs are short, with four toes on the fore, and three on the hind foot; and it has no tail.

These animals inhabit the banks of rivers, and are found in damp and hot places of South America: the flesh is very good to eat, and excessively fat. When pursued, they take to the water, and escape by diving. If attacked by dogs, it defends itself vigorously. The skin, though covered with short and rough hair, is valuable, because it is spotted on the sides.

The youth's instructor in natural history.

QL 706
.2
.Y68
no. 4
Rare Bk
Coll

73169328

YOUTH'S INSTRUCTER

IN

NATURAL HISTORY.