

huts, are round, and covered with a dome about a foot thick. Their materials are herbs and rushes interlaced, and cemented with earth, which they plash with their feet. They are impenetrable to rain, and furnished with steps in the inside, to prevent their being injured by inundations from the land. These huts, which serve the animals for a retreat, are covered, during winter, with several feet of snow and ice, without incommoding them. They lay not up provisions, like the beaver, but dig a kind of pits or passages under and round their habitations, to give them an opportunity of procuring water and roots.— Though thus associated, they pass the winter in melancholy. During all this period, they are deprived of light; and when the gentle breezes of the spring begin to dissolve the snow, and to discover the tops of their habitations, the hunters open the dome, suddenly dazzle them with the light, and kill or seize all those who have not time to retire to their subterraneous galleries, into which they are still followed; for their skin is valuable, and their flesh makes tolerable good eating.— Those who escape the vigilance of the hunter, quit their habitations at this time. They wander about in summer, but always in pairs. They feed upon herbs, and voraciously devour the fresh productions of the earth. By this redundancy of excellent nourishment the animals acquire an odour of musk, so strong as to be hardly supportable. This odour is perceived at a distance; and, though agreeable to Europeans, is so disgusting to the savages, that they have denominated a river, inhabited by a vast number of these rats, *the stinking river*. Their cry is a kind of groaning, which the hunter counterfeits, in order to make them approach him. Their fore-teeth are so strong, and so proper for cutting, that when shut up in a box of hard wood, they soon make a hole sufficient for their escape, which is a faculty they have in common with the beaver. They swim neither so long nor so swift as the beaver; but often go upon the ground. They do not run well, and they walk still worse, rocking from side to side, like a goose. Their skin preserves the smell of musk, which renders their fur not so generally agreeable; but the down or under hair, is used in the manufacturing of hats. These animals are not remarkably wild, and, when taken young are easily tamed. They are then very pretty; and their tail, which is long and flat, and makes their figure disagreeable, is, at this period of life, very short. They sport with as much innocence and gentleness as young cats. They never bite, and might be easily reared, if their odour were not disagreeable.

The MARRIN is generally eighteen inches long, and the tail ten more. It differs from the polecat, in being about four or five inches longer; its tail also is longer in proportion, and more bushy at the end; its nose is flatter; its cry is sharper and more piercing; its colours are more elegant; and what still adds to their beauty, its scent, very unlike the former, instead of being offensive, is considered as a most pleasing perfume. The martin, in short, is one of the most beautiful of all beasts of prey: its head is small and elegantly formed; its eyes lively; its ears are broad, round and open; its back; its sides, and tail, are covered with a fine, thick, downy fur, with longer hair intermixed; the roots are ash colour, the middle of a bright chesnut, the points black; the head is brown, with a slight cast of red; the legs, and up-