

III. *An Account of the Indian Badger; the Ursus indicus of Shaw's Zoology. By Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Hardwicke, F.L.S.*

*Read November 5, 1805.*

As the descriptions of the Indian Badger given by the late Mr. Pennant, in his *History of Quadrupeds*, No. 216, and by Doctor Shaw, in his *General Zoology*, Vol. i. page 470, are unaccompanied by figures of that animal, I beg leave to submit to the Linnean Society an accurate drawing (Tab. IX.) of a full-grown living subject, with such remarks relative to the manners of the animal as were obtained from the natives of India, and from observation of a living one kept in my possession more than twelve months.

To Mr. Pennant's description, the following remark may be added—The claws are unequal: those of the fore feet very long, and awl-shaped; the three middle ones much longer than the two lateral; the interior toe very remote from the rest: those of the hind toes remarkably short, nearly equal, and bearing no comparison to the strength of the claws of the fore feet.

The subject here figured was a female: in length two feet four inches, of which the tail measured four inches. In height eleven inches. At A. is exhibited the under side of the hind foot.

This animal is found in several parts of India along the courses of the Ganges and Jumna, between the fortress of Chunar Ghur and Delhi: more particularly where the country is cut into ravines, and in the high banks which in many parts border those rivers. It is rarely seen by day; but at night visits neighbouring towns and villages, inhabited by Mahomedans, and scratches up the

recently buried bodies of the dead, unless they are thickly covered with thorny bushes.

The natives, when encouraged by the expectation of purchasers, dig these animals out of their subterraneous retreats, and take them alive: the full-grown ones are with difficulty secured, and seldom bear confinement long, but roll and beat themselves about till they die. When taken young, they are very manageable, docile, and playful. It is a bold animal; its hide remarkably thick, and its strength too much for most dogs of common size. Its general food is flesh in any state: but it is remarkably eager after birds; and crows, which were sometimes given to the badger I had domesticated, were devoured with impatient avidity. Living rats seemed almost equally acceptable: and it seldom lost the opportunity of springing upon common fowls, when they happened incautiously to be feeding within the length of its chain. It has the inclination to climb upon walls, hedges, and trees; this, however, it seems to execute clumsily, but seldom falls, and will ramble securely upon every arm of a branching tree, that proves strong enough to bear its weight without much motion. This species burrows with great facility; scratching the earth like a dog with the fore feet, and expelling the loosened soil to the distance of two or three yards backwards. In ten minutes it will work itself under cover in the hardest ground: and is restless till it can form such a retreat to sleep in. It sleeps much by day; is watchful during the night; discovering inquietude by a hoarse call or bark, proceeding from the throat. The hair of this animal is short and wiry, nor has it any of the softness of fur. This quadruped is known to the natives of Hindustan by the name of *Beejoo*.

TAB. IX. represents the *Ursus indicus*, one fourth of its natural size.

