

fall, so that he is enabled to reach in one leap a great distance. This motion is not like the flight of a bird, nor the fluttering of a bat, both of which are made by striking the air with repeated vibrations. It is one single leap, caused by the first impulsion, the motion of which is prolonged, because the body of the animal presents to the air a larger surface, and thence finds a greater resistance, and falls more slowly. This singular extension of the skin is peculiar to the polatouch, and this characteristic is sufficient to distinguish him from all other squirrels, rats, or dormice. But the most singular things in Nature are not unparalleled; there is another animal of the same kind, with a similar skin, which is not only stretched from one leg to another, but from the head to the tail. This animal, whose figure and description has been given by Seba, under the denomination of the flying-squirrel of Virginia, seems so different from the polatouch, as to constitute another species; though probably it may be only a simple variety, or an accidental and monstrous production, for no traveller or naturalist makes mention of it. Seba is the only one who has seen it in the cabinet of Vincent; and I always distrust descriptions of animals made in cabinets of curiosities, which
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