

singular, that in Italy where this animal is common, and where there has ever been skilful philosophers and excellent observers of nature, that its history has never been written by any of them. Aldrovandus in speaking on this subject, has, like the rest, only copied Gesner; and the gentlemen of the academy, who have dissected eight of these animals, say very little that has any relation to their natural habits. We only learn from the testimonies of travellers, and persons who have kept them in menageries, that the porcupine in its domestic state, is neither savage nor furious, but only anxious for liberty; that with the assistance of its fore teeth, which are sharp and strong like those of the beaver, he easily cuts through his wooden prison. It is also known that he feeds willingly on fruits, cheese, and crumbs of bread; that in his wild state, he lives upon roots and wild grain; that when he can enter a garden he makes great havock*, eating the herbs, roots, fruit, &c. that he becomes fat, like most other animals, toward the end of summer;

* The porcupine is a perfect scourge to the gardens of the Cape of Good Hope; he commits great ravages in the plantations of cabbage, and other kitchen herbs. The wild herb of which this animal is most fond, is the *Calla Ethiopica*, which however, is so acrid, according to Sparrman, that the root or the leaves applied to any part of the body will raise a blister.