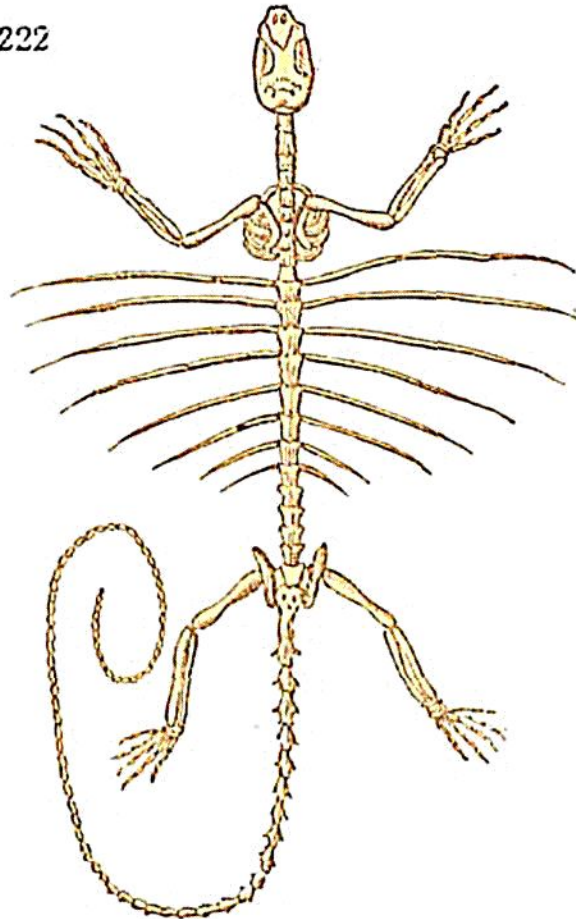


struments for assisting it in its distant leaps through the air, it is again the ribs which are resorted to for furnishing the basis of such an apparatus. On each side of the dorsal vertebræ, as is seen in the skeleton of this animal (Fig. 222,) the eight posterior ribs on each side, instead of having the usual curvature inwards, and instead of being continued round to encircle the body, are extended outwards and elongated, and are covered with a thin cuticle, derived from the common integuments. The ordinary muscles which move the ribs still remain, but with greatly increased power, and serve to flap these strangely formed wings at the pleasure of the animal, during its short aerial excursions.

222



Among the mammalia, we meet with a few species which have a broad membrane, formed of a duplicature of the skin, extended like a cloak from the fore to the hind extremities, and enabling the animal to flutter in the air, and to break its fall during its descent from the branches of trees. Structures of this kind are possessed by the *Sciurus volans*, or