

adhere to it till they attain the size of a mouse, which does not take place till they are fifty days old, at which period they begin to see; after this they do not wholly leave the pouch till they are as big as a rat!! This statement is so extraordinary, that, though apparently believed by Cuvier, on the authority of Barton,* it seems almost incredible. It is strange, as the animal seems common in America, that Say, or some other Zoologist of that country, has not turned his attention to it.

I have mentioned, on another occasion,† several particulars of the history of the kangaroo and koala, which I need not repeat here. Indeed our knowledge of the history and instincts of the Marsupian animals is very limited. Europe produces none. New Holland, some of the Asiatic islands, and North and South America, are their principal habitations. As the young of these animals leave the matrix of their mother at so early a period, and when, if they were exposed to the atmosphere, they must inevitably perish, it is evident that some such protection as that with which Providence has furnished them was necessary for the preservation of the race. Doubtless, some wise and beneficial end is answered by the seeming premature nativity of these little creatures.

The opossums are peculiar to America, and are remarkable for having a greater number of teeth than any other animal, amounting in all to fifty; they approach the Quadrumanes, by having the thumb of their hind foot opposed to the fingers, whence they have been called Pedimanes, but it is not armed with a nail. They are usually stationed on the trees, where they pursue birds and insects, though, like the monkeys, they often eat fruit, and by this structure of the hind foot they can probably better support themselves on the branches. Many of the animals of this Order tend also to the *Rodents*, and others to the *Predaceans*.

* Règn. An. I. 176.

† See above, p. 130, 155.