

Order 5.—The animals included in the Order of *Rodents*, or gnawers and nibblers, as I have before observed,* seem to occupy the same station amongst the Mammalians, that the *Hymenoptera* do amongst Insects, since they are the most remarkable of any for the arts which Providence has instructed them to exercise. This, as well as the preceding Order, seems very slightly connected with the great tribe of Ruminants: the Patagonian hare † however, of the Pampas, belonging to the Rodents, seems, in its light and elegant form, to make the nearest approximation to that tribe.

Several of the animals of the Order before us copy the members of the class of insects in one of their most remarkable peculiarities; during the cold or winter season they become torpid. This is the case with the dormouse, ‡ the marmots, § the prairie-dog, || and many other Rodents, as well as with many predaceous Mammalians, especially the insectivorous ones, as the hedge-hogs. ¶ The mole, and the bats, and even some of the largest animals, as the bear, are subject to the same law. When we consider the case of the insectivorous animals of the present class, we see at once the wisdom and goodness of the Lawgiver in this enactment. The reduction of the temperature, and other causes, have driven the insects from the theatre they usually frequent, to remain for a time without motion under the earth and other places of security, where they are safe from these their enemies; it was, therefore, a kind and wise provision, that as their accustomed food was beyond their reach, they themselves should also be placed in a state not to require it. Many other animals amongst the

* See above, p. 209.

† *Cavia patagonica*.

‡ *Myoxus avellanarius*.

§ *Arctomys*.

|| *Spermophilus ludovicianus*. Faun. Boreal. Americ. i. 156.

¶ *Erinaceus*.