

mild, where the dormice do not sleep continually, but taking nourishment every time they were revived by the warmth they might become fat, though in a torpid state. The truth is they are always fat, especially in autumn and summer. Their flesh is not unlike that of the guinea-pig. They were reckoned delicacies by the Romans, who reared great numbers of them. Varro describes the method of making warrens for them, as does Apicius of dressing them in the best manner. Their instructions, however, have been neglected, either from a disgust to a loir from his near resemblance to a rat, or from his flesh being unpalatable. I have been told by peasants who had eaten them, that it is hardly preferable to that of the water-rat.

The loir has a considerable resemblance to the squirrel in its natural habits; it lives in forests, climbs up trees, and leaps from branch to branch, though not so nimbly as the latter, because his legs are not so long, and he is as remarkable for being fat as the other is for being slender. Nuts, and other wild fruits, compose the usual nourishment of both; the loir likewise eats small birds, which he takes in their nests. He does not, like the squirrel, nestle on the upper parts of trees, but makes a
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