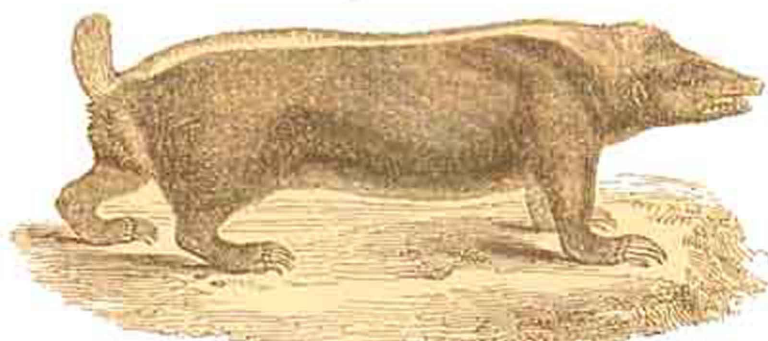


Fig. 76.



Mydaus molleceps, or badger-headed Mydaus. Length, including the tail, 16 inches.

animal from a foreign country. In my visits to the mountainous districts, I uniformly met with it; and, as far as the information of the natives can be relied on, it is found on all the mountains.\*

Now, if asked to conjecture how the Mydaus arrived at the elevated regions of each of these isolated mountains, we might say that, before the island was peopled by man, by whom their numbers are now thinned, they may occasionally have multiplied so as to be forced to collect together and migrate: in which case, notwithstanding the slowness of their motions, some few would succeed in reaching another mountain, some twenty, or even, perhaps, fifty miles distant; for although the climate of the hot intervening plains would be unfavourable to them, they might support it for a time, and would find there abundance of insects on which they feed. Volcanic eruptions, which, at different times, have covered the summits of some of those lofty cones with sterile sand and ashes, may have occasionally contributed to force on these migrations.

*Drifting of animals on ice-floes.*—The power of the terrestrial mammalia to cross the sea is very limited, and it was before stated that the same species is scarcely ever common to districts widely separated by the ocean. If there be some exceptions to this rule, they generally admit of explanation; for there are natural means whereby some animals may be floated across the water, and the sea may in the course of ages wear a wide passage through a neck of land, leaving individuals of a species on each side of the new channel. Polar bears are known to have been frequently drifted on the ice from Greenland to Iceland: they can also swim to considerable distances, for Captain Parry, on the return of his ships through Barrow's Strait, met with a bear swimming in the water about midway between the shores, which were about forty miles apart, and where no ice was in sight.† “Near the east coast of Greenland,” observes Scoresby, “they have been seen on the ice in such quantities, that they were compared to flocks of sheep on a common; and they are often found on field-ice, above two hundred miles from the shore.”‡ Wolves, in the arctic regions, often venture upon the ice near the shore, for the purpose of

\* Horsfield, Zoological Researches in Java, No. ii., from which the figure is taken.

† Append. to Parry's Second Voyage, years 1819–20.

‡ Account of the Arctic Regions, vol. i. p. 518.