

There are also a few species still living in America, but at the present day not a single marsupial animal lives on the continent of Asia, Africa, or Europe.

The name of pouched animals is given to the class on account of the purse-shaped pouch (marsupium) existing in most instances on the abdominal side of the female animals, in which the mother carries about her young for a considerable time after their birth. This pouch is supported by two characteristic marsupial bones, also existing in Cloacal animals, but not in Placental animals. The young Marsupial animal is born in a much more imperfect form than the young Placental animal, and only attains the same degree of development which the latter possesses directly at its birth, after it has developed in the pouch for some time. In the case of the giant kangaroo, which attains the height of a man, the newly born young one, which has been carried in the maternal womb not much longer than five weeks, is not more than an inch in length, and only attains its essential development subsequently, in the pouch of the mother, where it remains about nine months attached to the nipple of the mammary gland.

The different divisions generally distinguished as families in the sub-class of Marsupial animals, deserve in reality the rank of independent orders, for they differ from one another in manifold differentiations of the jaw and limbs, in much the same manner, although not so sharply, as the various orders of Placental animals. In part they perfectly agree with the latter. It is evident that adaptation to similar conditions of life has effected entirely coincident or analogous transformations of the original fundamental form