HAPALOTIS CERVINUS, Gould.

Fawn-coloured Hapalotis.

Hapalotis cervinus, Gould, in Proc. of Zool. Soc. 1851, p. 127.

If the Great Red Kangaroo may be extolled as the finest of the Kangaroos, it must be conceded that the present animal is the most graceful and elegant of the Jerboa-like rodents to which the generic term of *Hapalotis* has been applied. For its discovery and introduction to this country we are indebted to the researches of Captain Sturt, who has thus afforded another instance of the anxiety with which this intrepid traveller seeks to promote the cause of science, not only in his immediate vocation as a soldier and explorer, but in the department of zoology, a department never neglected by him whenever he has had opportunities of adding to its stores. It was during the most hazardous of his journeys towards the centre of Australia, that Captain Sturt first met with this pretty species.

"On the 20th," says Captain Sturt, "we found ourselves in lat. 29° 6', and halted on one of those clear patches on which the rain-water lodges, but it had dried up, and there was only a little for our use in a small gutter not far distant. Whilst we were here encamped, a little Jerboa was chased by the dogs into a hole close by the drays, which, with four others, we succeeded in capturing by digging for them. This beautiful little animal burrows in the ground like a mouse, but their habitations have several passages leading straight, like the radii of a circle, to a common centre, to which a shaft is sunk from above, so that there is a complete circulation of air along the whole. We fed our little captives on oats, on which they thrived and became exceedingly tame. They generally huddled together in a corner of their box; but when darting from one side to the other, they hopped on their hind legs, which, like those of the Kangaroo, are much longer than the fore ones, and held the tail perfectly straight and horizontal. At this date they were a novelty to us, but we subsequently saw great numbers of them, and ascertained that the natives frequented the sandy ridges in order to procure them for food. Those we succeeded in capturing were, I am sorry to say, lost from neglect. This species feeds on tender shoots of plants, and must live for many months without water, the situation in which it is found precluding the possibility of its obtaining any for lengthened intervals."

The whole of the head, upper surface and sides of the body of the most delicate fawn-colour, interspersed with numerous fine black hairs on the head and back; whiskers greyish black; nose and under surface white; tail pale brown, lighter beneath; ears very large, somewhat pointed, and nearly destitute of hairs.

The figures are of the natural size; the darker-coloured figure representing a variety sometimes met with.