PERAMELES GUNNII, *Gray.*

Gunn's Perameles.

Perameles Gunnii, Gray in Proc. of Zool. Soc., part vi. p. 1.—Ib. Ann. of Nat. Hist., vol. i. p. 108.—Waterh. in Jard. Nat. Lib. *Marsupialia*, p. 156, pl. 15.—Gray, List of Spec. of Mamm. in Coll. Brit. Mus., p. 95. —Waterh. Nat. Hist. of Mamm., vol. i. p. 376.—Gunn in Proc. of Roy. Soc. of Van Diemen's Land, vol. ii. p. 83.

It is well that the name of Mr. Ronald C. Gunn, a gentleman devotedly attached to natural history, and long resident in Tasmania, should be perpetuated in a work of science, as the author would fain have the present considered to be, since he has not only paid considerable attention to the Botany, but also to the Zoology and even to the physical features of his adopted country; and hence I have great pleasure in figuring so conspicuous an animal as the present under his name.

The *Perameles Gunnii* is an inhabitant of Tasmania, and appears to be more common in the northern than in the southern parts of that country; it also, if I mistake not, inhabits the islands in Bass's Straits, and even the southern portions of the continent of Australia. I say this, however, somewhat doubtfully, because I possess no certain evidence that the animal has been killed at Port Phillip, though I have received it direct from thence; but it is just possible that it had been taken there before its transhipment to this country; I incline, however, to consider it a native of those parts as well as of Tasmania. In size this species ranges next to *Perameles nasuta*, being in fact intermediate between that animal and *P. myosurus*; but from these, as well as all others, it differs in its short and white tail; in the banding of its back it approaches *P. fasciata*—but these marks are not so dark or so well defined. Mr. Gunn has given us an interesting account of the destructive habits of this animal when gardens come within its range. This account, moreover, indicates the kind of food upon which it naturally subsists, a point well worthy of the attention of those who have the charge of menageries, and who would wish to be successful in their mode of treating and preserving this tribe of animals.

"It has sometimes been doubted," says Mr. Gunn, "whether the *Perameles* feed upon roots. For several years past my garden at Launceston has suffered severely from the attacks of *P. Gunnii*. Two beds of *Ixia maculata*, var. *viridis*, were entirely eaten, so as to eradicate the species. Some other *Ixiæ* and *Babianæ* were afterwards attacked; but many *genera* of Cape bulbs close to them were left untouched. The *Crocus* seems an especial favourite, as wherever they occurred they were diligently sought out, rooted up, and eaten, and that too at a season when no leaves appeared above ground to indicate their position. Tulips seem to be less relished, although they are occasionally eaten. In the bush I lately discovered a new species of tuberous fungus partly eaten, at the bottom of a hole about nine inches deep, which I believe had been the work of a *Perameles*; my impression is that the *Perameles* live a good deal, if not principally, upon roots and fungi."

The fur is moderate in length and not so hard to the touch as that of *P. obesula* or *P. nasuta*; the hairs of the upper surface are grey at the root, the visible portion of each being pencilled with black and ochreous yellow; on the sides the general hue is somewhat paler, the hairs having a smaller amount of the black pencilling and a delicate vinous tint; on the hind quarters the ground-colour is blackish brown, and on this part are three broad light-coloured bands, the first of which crosses the back slightly in front of the thigh, the second is nearly transverse, and the third longitudinal; under surface pure white; the feet and tail are also white, with the exception of a dusky patch on the base of the latter, and on the sides of the heel of the hind foot the sides are dusky; ears internally clothed with very small pale yellow hairs, but on the hinder part they are nearly white; a broad dusky mark crosses the outer surface of the ear, commencing about the middle of the anterior margin, and running obliquely backwards as it descends to the base.

The Plate represents the male, female, and young, of the size of life.