BETTONGIA PENICILLATA, *Gray.*

Jerboa Kangaroo.

Spec. Char.—*Bett. fusca, ferrugineo-albo irrorata, corpore subtùs sordidè albo; auribus brevibus, rotundatis, et intùs pilis brevibus flavis indutis; tarsis pallidè fuscis; caudâ ferrugineo-fuscâ supernè; apice, per partem quartam longitudinis totius, pilis fusco nigris, floccosis, instructâ.*

Descr.—Fur moderately long, and not very soft to the touch; general colour brown; the hairs on the upper surface grey at the base, pencilled with rusty white near the tip, and black at the point; under surface dirty white; internal surface of the ear yellow; feet very pale brown; tail rich rusty brown above and pale brown beneath, the apical quarter clothed with brownish-black hairs, which are longer than those of the other parts of the tail, and form a kind of tuft.

	Male.		Female.	
	feet.	inches.	feet.	inches.
Length from the nose to the extremity of the tail	2	6	2	0
,, of tail	1	1		$11\frac{1}{4}$
,, ,, tarsus and toes, including the nail		5		4
,, ,, arm and hand, including the nails		$3\frac{1}{2}$		$2\frac{3}{4}$
,, ,, face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear		$3\frac{1}{2}$		3
,, ,, ear		$1\frac{1}{4}$		1

Bettongia penicillata, Gray in Mag. Nat. Hist. for Nov. 1837, vol. i. New Series, p. 584.
Hypsiprymnus murinus, Ogilby, in Proc. of Zool. Soc. Part VI. p. 63.

All my specimens of this little animal were collected in the interior, both on the Liverpool Plains and to the northward of them; I even found it plentiful on the Lower Namoi; but whether it does or does not inhabit the coast side of the ranges, and over what extent of the Australian continent it is found, I am unable to state, as I only saw it in the localities above-mentioned.

Like the other members of the genus, this species constructs a thick grassy nest, which is placed in a hollow scratched on the ground for its reception, so that when completed it is only level with the surrounding grass, which it so closely resembles, that without a careful survey it may be passed unnoticed: the site chosen for the nest is either at the foot of a bush or any large tuft of grass; during the day it is generally tenanted by one, and sometimes by a pair of these little creatures, which lying coiled in the centre are perfectly concealed from view; there being no apparent outlet, it would seem that after they have crept under they drag the grass completely over the entrance, when, as I have before stated, the whole is so like the surrounding herbage that it is scarcely perceptible. The natives, however, rarely pass without detecting its presence, and almost invariably kill the sleeping inmates, by dashing their tomahawk or heavy clubs at it. The most curious circumstance connected with the history of the Jerboa Kangaroo is the mode in which it collects the grasses for its nest: these, as may be seen in the accompanying Plate, are carried with its tail, which is strongly prehensile, and, as may be easily imagined, their appearance when leaping towards their nests with their tails loaded with grasses is exceedingly grotesque and amusing: this curious feat is even exhibited in a state of confinement, the Earl of Derby having a pair of them in his Menagerie at Knowseley, which evince the same natural habits, and which frequently load their tails with the hay of their nests, and carry it round the cage in which they are kept. The most usual resorts of the Jerboa Kangaroo are low grassy hills and dry ridges, thinly intersected with trees and bushes; and although not strictly gregarious, numbers may be found in the same locality. It is a nocturnal animal, lying curled up in the shape of a ball during the day, and sallying forth as night approaches in quest of food, which consists of grasses and roots, the latter being procured by scratching and burrowing, for which their fore-claws are admirably adapted, and their vicinity is frequently indicated by the little excavations they have made. When startled from their nest they bound with amazing rapidity, and always seek the shelter of a hollow tree, or a small hole in a rock, etc.