Subclass II. DIDELPHIA.

Order IX. MARSUPIALIA.

The great group of Marsupials, separated by most modern zoologists as a distinct subclass of the Mammalia, was widely spread over the globe in geological times; but is now, as is well known, confined to the Australian and Neotropical regions. It is true that one species ranges far into North America; but the order, in the western hemisphere, is essentially characteristic of the Neotropical fauna, and is well represented in our subregion by both the known genera of the only New-World family, Didelphidæ, which differs in several points from all the Australian forms*.

Fam. I. DIDELPHIDÆ.

1. DIDELPHYS.

_Didelphis_, Linnaeus, Syst. Nat. i. p. 71 (1766).
_Didelphys_, Schreber, Sängth. iii. p. 532 (1778).

Of the two forms of the family Didelphidæ which are well ascertained, the typical genus _Didelphys_ is suited for an arboreal, not an aquatic life, and is at once recognizable by its hind feet, the toes of which are not united by a web. It presents a large number of species, often differing from each other considerably in colour and greatly in size, but agreeing in their general habits. The characteristic _marsupium_, or abdominal pouch, is well developed in some species of Opossum, and only rudimentary in others; and Mr. Waterhouse has consequently divided the genus into two sections, under which we may thus characterize the known Central-American Opossums:—

A. Pouch complete.

1. _D. virginiana_. Fur with long stiff projecting hairs; yellowish grey, the face lighter, with a dusky mark in front of each eye, and sometimes a trace of a median band; ears and tail variably blotched with dark brown and white. Length about 22", of tail 15".

2. _D. aurita_. Like the last species; but the long stiff hairs mostly white above, and the face with three defined blackish-brown stripes; ears black, or black-

* A small Marsupial from Ecuador, named _Hyracodon fuliginosus_ by Mr. Tomes (P. Z. S. 1863, p. 51, pl. viii.), may represent a distinct family, but it is still only known from the very unsatisfactory original description. In any case it will require a new title, the name _Hyracodon_ having been applied to a genus of fossil Ungulates by Professor Leidy in 1856, seven years before its use by Mr. Tomes.