

the majority of cases, it would give great offence both to parents and children, were she to attempt practically to instruct them in those lighter domestic duties, on the performance of which so much of the happiness and brightness of home depends. It is quite as much as she can venture upon to ask a young lady to group a few flowers—she must know well the character of her pupil before she can request her to dust the vases in which they are to be arranged.

But there are sensible mothers who are constantly striving to combat the natural tendency of young people to love ease and pleasure in preference to useful occupation, and an improving course of study. All honor be to them who thus labor, and may that labor be crowned with the Divine blessing.

These hasty observations are penned with an earnest desire to assist mothers in turning the events which have lately transpired, and are still progressing, to good account in the education of their daughters. We hope, too, that they may be read by some, who will remember past efforts that have been made to rouse them to a sense of their individual responsibility, both towards their families and society at large.—*British Mother's Journal*.

## SCIENCE.

### Notes on the Natural History of Canada.

*The Star-Nosed Mole.—Genus, CONDYLURA. (Illiger.)*

#### DENTAL FORMULA.

*Incisive 24; Canine 141-141; Molar 87-87=40.*

**Generic Characters.**—Body thick, furry; muzzle much elongated, bordered with membranous crests, disposed star-like round the opening of the nostrils; no ears; eyes small; feet five-toed, nails formed for digging; those behind slender and weak. The generic name is from the Greek (*kondule*) a swelling, and (*oure*) a tail, in allusion to the swollen state of the tail of this animal sometimes observed. Only one species of this remarkable genus is known, which is the following:—

*CONDYLURA CRISTATA. (Linn.)*

#### *Synonymes.*

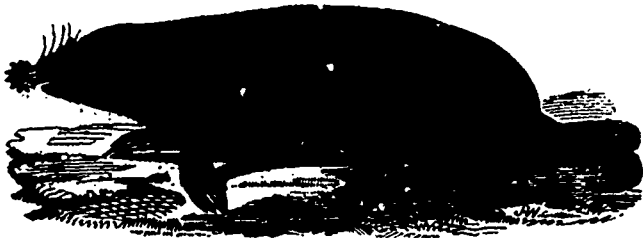
*SONERE CRISTATA, Linn, Ed. 12, p. 73.*

*TALPA LONGICAUDATA. Pennant's Hist. Quad., Vol. 2, p. 232.*

*CONDYLURA LONGICAUDATA. Richardson, Fauna, p. 13.*

*C———MACROURA. " id. p. 234.*

*C———CRISTATA. Audubon & Bachman, Vol. 2, p. 139.*



The length of the star-nosed mole from the point of the nose to the root of the tail is about 5 inches, length of tail three inches, from heel to end of claw  $\frac{1}{2}$  of an inch, breadth of palm  $\frac{6}{8}$ . The head is long pointed and terminated in a snout which, at its extremity is surrounded by a fringe of about twenty cartilaginous points. The body is cylindrical, the neck short, and the eyes small. The moustaches are few and short. There is an orifice in place of an external ear, which does not project through the skin. The fore feet are longer than those of the common American shrew mole, the palms destitute of hairs, but covered with scales; claws, flattened, sharp, channelled beneath; hind extremities longer than the fore ones, placed far back; feet nearly naked, scaly; tail sub-cylindrical, sparingly covered with coarse hair. The fur is brownish black; some of the specimens have dark brown feet, others pale ashy brown or even white.

This animal is a harmless little creature, subsisting on insects, worms and larvæ of various kinds. According to Dr. Godman it prefers the banks of small streams or swampy land, where in many places the burrows are so numerous that "it is scarcely possible

to advance a step without breaking down their galleries. The excavations which are most continuous, and appear to be most frequented, are placed at a short distance below the roots of the grass on the banks of small streams; these are to be traced along their margins, following every inflexion, and making frequent circuits in order to pass large stones or roots of trees, to regain their usual proximity to the surface nearest the water." Audubon says that the burrows are deeper than those described by Godman, and that the chamber of habitation at the end is spacious, with a comfortable nest of withered leaves and dry grass. Out of one of these he took three young ones about a week old, and found that the radiations of the nose were then so slightly developed that the animals might have been mistaken for the young of the common mole. When confined in a box they would eat meat.

The use of the extraordinary appendage at the end of the nose is not known with certainty. It is only barely probable that as the animal subsists by groping about under the ground in search of worms and other small prey, the ornament on his muzzle may assist it in the search.

At certain seasons it is observed that the tail of the star-nosed mole is much swollen, and hence the mistake of Dr. Harlow, who, upon a specimen taken in this condition, made a new species with the name *macroura*, or long tailed mole. This species is found in Canada but rarely, although it appears to be distributed all over the province. In the United States it occurs in all the northern and eastern portions and as far south as the borders of South Carolina.

### *The Common Weasel. (Putorius erminea.)*

*PUTORIUS ERMINEA. — Linn.*

#### WHITE WEASEL.—STOAT.

The common Weasel of Canada is the true *ERMINE*, the animal which in the feudal ages yielded the fur for the most choice mantles of nobles and kings. The best naturalists, after the most careful examination and comparison of specimens from all the countries inhabited by this species, have failed to detect any difference whatever of sufficient importance to justify the separation of the American from the European or Asiatic Ermine. Its geographical range therefore is enormous, being nearly the whole of the northern part of the world as far south as latitude  $40^{\circ}$ .

The length of the ermine from the point of the nose to the root of the tail is about ten inches, length of tail five inches and a-half. The color is pure white or yellowish-white in winter, and in summer reddish-brown above and white beneath. The tip of the tail is always black. The body is slender, legs short, five toes on each foot, inner toe the shortest, ears broad and rounded, the fur soft and short, and the tail somewhat bushy at the end.

Audubon describes the Weasel as "fierce and bloodthirsty, possessing an intuitive propensity to destroy every animal and bird



within its reach, some of which, such as the American rabbit, the ruffed grouse, and domestic fowl, are ten times its own size. It is a notorious and hated depredator of the poultry house, and we have known forty well grown fowls to have been killed in one night by a single Ermine. Satiated with the blood of probably a single fowl, the rest, like the flock slaughtered by the wolf in the sheepfold, were destroyed in obedience to a law of nature, an instinctive propensity to kill. We have traced the footsteps of this bloodsucking little animal on the snow, pursuing the trail of the American rabbit, and although it could not overtake its prey by superior speed, yet the timid hare soon took refuge in the hollow of a tree, or in a hole dug by the marmot, or skunk. Thither it was pursued by the Ermine, and destroyed, the skin and other remains at the mouth of the burrow bearing evidence of the fact. We observed an Ermine, after having captured a hare of the above species, first behead it and then drag the body some twenty yards over the fresh fallen snow, beneath which it was concealed, and the snow tightly pressed over it; the little prowler displaying