

Odontophore. The teeth are usually ranged upon it, in a median and two lateral tracts, which have been called the rachis and pleurae terms which are scarcely necessary, and, the first at least, not free from serious objections. The Odontophore is sometimes short but often of great length, its edges behind the mouth being united so as to form a tube, which after passing for a short distance under the oesophagus is rolled or spirally twisted. It seems that the part in use is soon worn away and that the reserved portion is gradually pushed forward, the tube slitting open so as to afford a fresh surface. The form of the teeth both median and lateral, the number in each row and the number of rows vary in different families and different species, and are apparently adapted to the kind of food and the mode of procuring it employed by the animal. Hence, besides the use which may be made of the minuter differences as specific characters, the leading varieties, like the differences in the beaks of birds marking their kind of food or mode of appropriating it, serve to distinguish families, and may now be said to be of great and unquestionable importance.

Even so late indeed as the publication of Mr. Woodward's valuable manual, the extent to which they could be used seemed very doubtful, and he makes objections to their systematic value being estimated highly. He says: "It must be remembered that the teeth are essentially *epithelial cells*, and, like other superficial organs, liable to be modified in accordance with the wants and habits of the creatures. The instruments with which animals obtain their food are of all others most subject to these *adaptive* modifications, and can never form the *basis* of a philosophical system." He adds this note, "the carnivorous opossums have teeth adapted for eating flesh, but are not on that account to be classified with the placental carnivora."

It may be replied that our object being to bring together creatures of like organization and mode of living, the adaptive modifications of a common plan which determine the kind of food and mode of life are precisely what we ought to make use of, except for the highest divisions, and we find both the teeth of Mammalia, and, as already referred to, the beaks of birds, are of prominent importance in characterising even the great families. We should not allow resemblances or differences of the Odontophore of Mollusks to interfere with the classes or orders which depend on higher characters, nor ought we to use distinctions derived from this one part alone, or we should create an *artificial* system not perhaps better than others, and more difficult of application