

## ON THE MOLE.

DEAR SIR,—I herewith send you some observations on the mole leaving you to add the scientific names to the little animals mentioned further on.

I believe that very few people know how voracious the common meadow mole is. I have read stories told by Indians about the Carcajou, or Wolverine killing and eating two moose in a single night, but my doubt have been almost dispelled by witnessing the gluttony of this little creature.

One day last week two White-bellied or Wood Mice were caught in a trap; I cannot say whether the mole or the mice were caught first but in the evening one living mole was found in the trap, and two full grown Wood mice, dead, one of the latter being about half eaten. The evening of that same day, the mole was placed in an old laundry boiler and the entire dead mouse given to it, which by morning was entirely eaten bones and all except the hair. We then gave the mole a large rat just killed, when it at once proceeded to eat out its eyes, and by 4 o'clock next afternoon one side of the rat's head, bone, together with the brains, were eaten, and strange to say the mole looked no larger.

The Indians of Hudson Bay say that the Carcajou, after eating one moose, squeezes himself between two trees, which process packs what he has devoured and makes room for moose No. 2; be that as it may, our mole had no chance for any such cheating, but did all by fair eating. Our curiosity was aroused to know by what means a mole or shrew could kill mice which were larger than itself; so four large meadow mice being procured, they were placed in the boiler with the mole, which as soon as it met a mouse, showed fight, but the mouse knocked it away with its front feet and leaped as far away as it could. The mole from the first seemed not to see very plainly and started around the boiler at a lively rate reaching and scenting in all directions with its long nose like a pig that has broken into a back yard and smells the swill barrel. The mice seemed terror stricken momentarily rising on their hind legs, looking for some place to escape leaping about squeaking in their efforts to keep out of the way of the mole which pursued them constantly. The mole's mode of attack was to seize the mouse in the region of the throat. This it did by turning its head as it sprang at the mouse, at the same time utter-

ing a chattering sound. The mice would strike at, and usually knock the mole away with their front feet but if the latter got a hold of a mouse, it would then try to bite, and they would both tumble about like dogs it a fight. The little chap at last attacked one mouse and kept with it, and in about ten minutes had it killed; but even before it was dead the mole commenced eating its eyes and face. About ten minutes later the mole had devoured all the head of the mouse and continued to eat. I have captured and caged several moles this winter and they all display the same untiring greedy nature. According to my observations the little mammal under consideration eats about twice or three times its own weight of food every 24 hours and when we consider that their principal food consist of insects, it is quite bewildering to imagine the myriads one must destroy in a year. I think they are quite likely to kill hundreds of insects more than they need to eat, amongst which there may be many of our greatest pests, yet many people destroy moles and bats at every opportunity, both of which may be numbered amongst our most beneficial and harmless creatures. I would here like to mention that I think whoever kills a toad is doing wrong as they also live upon insects. I once saw a dead one that a waggon wheel had crushed, and to all appearance its stomach must have contained at that time about a score of potato beetles besides other insects.

JOHN A. MORDEN.

Hyde Park, Ont., 8 Dec. 1888.

## NESTING OF THE COMMON RAIL

(*Porzana Carolina*), Niell.

Assuming that some account of the nesting, and other habits of this bird may be interesting to your readers, I send you a few remarks in regard to my experience during the past season. Excepting stuffed specimens seen in different collections, I had never noticed one of them in our part of the country, until the evening of the last of July of the present year. In the evening while returning from my farm — *Wildwood* — which lies on the north-west of this corporation, I got a glimpse of a strange bird running along the edge of a pond. The farm is near the line, which is a continuation of the Main Street of this town and adjacent are a number of small ponds formed by excavating clay for brick-making. Some