

parallel; the descending ramus is bent, so as to be exactly horizontal behind, the postero-inferior edge being a straight line, nearly perpendicular to the vertical plane of the skull's axis. The conformation of the incisor-teeth is admirably adapted to the purposes they have to fulfil; no carpenter's gouging chisels are more effective tools than are these exquisitely-constructed teeth. It is essential that they should always have a sharp-cutting edge, in order to nip through the tough vegetable fibre on which the animal subsists; at the same time, strength and durability are indispensable. The Aplodontia has no whetstone or razor-grinder, to sharpen his tools when they grow blunt; but an Allwise Providence has so fashioned these wondrous chisels in all rodents, that the more they are used the sharper they keep; the contrivance is simple as it is beautiful. The substance of the tooth itself is composed of tough ivory, but plated on the outer surface with enamel as hard as steel. The ivory, being the softer material, of course wears away faster than the enamel; hence the latter, plating the front of the tooth, is always left with a sharp-cutting edge.

The position this genus should occupy, in a systematic arrangement of the rodents, has always