

American species, all agreeing very nearly in habits and form.

Insectivora (*Insect-eaters*) is the next order, comprising only the shrews and moles. The shrew mouse (*sorex*) or short-tailed shrew, is remarkable for its diminutive size and apparent helplessness, rarely showing itself by day. Measuring only $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches, it may properly be considered the smallest mammiferous animal belonging to this continent: Although cats will destroy these little creatures with as great eagerness as they do mice, it is a well-ascertained fact that they will never devour them, probably from the strong musky smell they emit. They frequent the long grass in orchards, and the outskirts of gardens. The American mole is by no means to be confounded with its European namesake, the former being the *scalops*, or shrew mole of Cuvier, in contradistinction to the *talpa* or mole proper. The adaptation of the structure of animals to their modes of life, is perhaps in no instance more apparent than in the organization of this creature. Its short and strong fore-limbs, broad, firm feet, and powerful claws, pointed nose, of which the extremity moves in all directions, the round form of its body, and minute eyes, are all so befitting the place and manner of its life, that without the combination of these parts, it could never exist. His eyes are adapted to the mere perception of light, since distant vision would be useless to one living entirely under ground, and being so densely covered with a silky fur, are proof against the moist earth, through which it travels. Its sense of hearing is very acute, diving into the earth with a facility perfectly astonishing.

In the construction of its dwelling it displays much taste and judgment. This consists of a little hillock in some dry place, from which paths run in all directions, each terminating at the surface, where a small aperture is left. These paths, as well as the ground about its headquarters, are made solid by the continual passing of their inmates, so that they not only may not admit water during rainy weather, but serve also as a means by which they obtain their daily food, consisting of worms and insects, which finding their way into them cannot escape, and thus fall an easy prey.

All attempts at taming a mole have hitherto proved unsuccessful; we, however, subjoin the following account of one brought by some young people to the Rev. J. C. Wood, a naturalist. It ran about in a large box in which it was secured, with

great agility, thrusting its long and flexible snout into every crevice. A little earth was placed in the box which it entered and re-entered, scattering it tolerably evenly here and there, twitching every now and then with a quick convulsive shaking, the loose earth from its fur. It was unremitting in its efforts to get through the box, but the wood was too tough for it to make an impression; and after satisfying itself that it could not get through a deal board it took to attempts to scramble over the sides, ever slipping sideways, and coming down on its forefeet. Its sight and smell seemed to be practically obsolete, for a worm placed close to its nose was not detected; but no sooner did it touch one than in a moment it flung itself upon it shaking it backward and forward, till, getting it fairly into its mouth, it devoured it with a greedy crunching sound.

Having heard from popular report that a twelve hours' fast would kill a mole, Mr. Woods resolved to try the experiment, so having dug a handful of worms he placed them in the box. In its movements backward and forwards it came upon this mass of worms, on which it flung itself in a paroxysm of excitement, pulling them about in every direction; at last having settled on one it commenced operations, the rest making their escape to the loose mould. Thinking it had now a sufficient supply, two dozen worms having been put in, Mr. W. shut up the box, which was not opened until the next morning. Twelve hours had elapsed since the supply was inserted but as it probably spent an hour in hunting for and devouring the others, eleven hours probably had only gone by since the last worm was consumed, but the mole was dead.

The extreme voracity and restless movements here recorded show its value to the agriculturist; for though generally considered a perfect nuisance in gardens and lawns, yet his destruction of worms and grubs might still show a balance in his favor: and in certain localities such as old rocky pastures, by throwing up and loosening the soil, and as a subsoil drainer who works without wages, it is of great benefit.

There is another species of this family, much more rare, the star-nosed mole, (*Condylura*) extending through Canada and the Northern States. The whole family pass their winters in a state of torpidity. Found about old buildings, fences, and stone walls, occasionally finding its way into cellars, where, if there is a