The only opportunity that was ever afforded us of judging of the speed of the Fisher occurred near the Virginia Gray-Sulphur Springs, in 1839. We had ascended Peter's Mountain in search of rare plants for our herbarium; out of health and fatigued, we had for some time been seated on a rock to rest, when we observed a gray squirrel pass within ten feet of us, seemingly in a great fright, and with all the speed it could command, with a Fisher in full pursuit. They were both too occupied with their own affairs to take any notice of us. The Fisher seemed to make more rapid progress than the squirrel, and we feel confident that if the latter had not mounted a tree it would have been overtaken before it could have advanced many feet farther: it ran rapidly up the sides of a cucumber tree, still pursued by its hungry be. The squirrel leaped lightly among the smaller branches, on which its heavier pursuer seemed unwilling to trust himself. At length the affrighted animal pitched from one of the topmost boughs and landed on its feet unhurt among the rocks beneath. We expected every moment to see the Fisher give us a specimen also of his talent at lofty tumbling, but he seemed to think that the "better part of valor was discretion," and began to run down the stem of the tree. At this point we interfered. Had he imitated the squirrel in its flying leap, he might have been entitled to the prey, provided he could overtake it; but he chose to exercise some stratagems and jockeying in the race, when the chances were so much in his favour, we resolved to end the chase by running to the foot of the tree which the Fisher was descending. He paused on the opposite side as if trying to ascertain whether he had been observed; we were without a gun, but rattled away with a knife on our botanizing box, which seemed to frighten the Marten in his turn, most effectually; — the more noise we created the greater appeared to be his terror; after ascending to the top of the tree he sprang to another, which he rapidly descended, fill within twenty feet of the earth, when he jumped to the ground, and with long leaps ran rapidly down the side of the mountain, and was out of sight in a few moments.

This scene occurred in the morning of a warm day in the month of July, a proof that this species is not altogether nocturnal in its habits. We are, however, inclined to believe that the above was only an exception to the general character of the animal.

Species that are decidedly nocturnal in their habits, frequently may be seen moving about by day during the period when they are engaged in providing for their young. Thus the raccoon, the opossum, and all our hares, are constantly met with in spring, and early summer, in the morning.

GENUS MUSTELA.—Cuv.

DENTAL FORMULA.

\[
\text{Incisive} \frac{6}{6}; \quad \text{Canine} \frac{1-1}{1-1}; \quad \text{Molar} \frac{5}{6} = 38.
\]

Head, small and oval; muzzle, rather large; ears, short and round; body, long, vermiciform; tail, usually long and cylindrical; legs, short; five toes on each foot, armed with sharp, crooked, slightly retractile claws. No anal pouch, but a small gland which secretes a thickish offensive fluid. Fur, very fine.

This genus differs from the genus Putorius, having four carnivorous teeth on each side, in the upper jaw, instead of three, the number the true weasels exhibit, and, the last carnivorous tooth on the lower jaw, has a rounded lobe on the inner side, which renders this genus somewhat less carnivorous in its habits than Putorius; and consequently a slight diminution of the cruelty and ferocity displayed by animals of the latter genus, may be observed in those forming the present.

There are about twelve species of true Martens known, four of which inhabit North America.

The generic name Mustela, is derived from the Latin word mustela, a weasel.

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MUSTELA CANADENSIS.—Schreber.

Pennant's Marten or Fisher.

Black Fox or Black Cat of the Northern Hunters.

PLATE XLI.—Male.

capite et humeris cano fuscoque mixtis; naso, labiis, cruribus, et cauda, fusco-nigris.

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