INTRODUCTION.

In presenting the following pages to the public, the authors desire to say a few words explanatory of the subject on which they have written. The difficulties they have attempted to surmount, and the labour attending their investigations, have far exceeded their first anticipations.

Many of the "Quadrupeds of North America" were long since described by European authors, from stuffed specimens; and in every department of Natural History additions to the knowledge of the old writers have been making for years past; researches and investigations having been undertaken by scientific observers in all parts of the world, and many specimens accumulated in the Museums of Europe. Comparatively little, however, has of late been accomplished toward the proper elucidation of the animals which inhabit the fields, forests, fertile prairies, and mountainous regions of our widely-extended and diversified country.

The works of Harlan and of Godman were confined to the limited number of species known in their day. The valuable "Fauna Boreali Americana" of Richardson was principally devoted to the description of species which exist in the British Provinces, north of the United States; and the more recent work of Dr. Dekay professes to describe only the Quadrupeds of the State of New-York, although giving a catalogue of those noticed by authors as existing in other portions of North America.

Several American and European Zoologists have, however, at different times, given the results of their investigations in various scientific journals, thus making it important for us to examine numberless
papers, published in different cities of Europe and America. We have, in all cases, sought to discover and give due credit to every one who has in this manner made known a new species; but as possibly some author may have published discoveries in a journal we have not seen, we must at once announce our conviction, that the task of procuring and reading all the zoological papers scattered through the pages of hundreds of periodicals, in many different languages, is beyond our power, and that no one can reasonably complain when we take the liberty of pronouncing for ourselves on new or doubtful species without hesitation, from the sources of knowledge to which we have access, and from our own judgment.

The geographical range which we have selected for our investigations is very extensive, comprising the British and Russian possessions in America, the whole of the United States and their territories, California, and that part of Mexico north of the tropic of Cancer; we having arrived at the conclusion, that in undertaking the natural history of a country, our researches should not be confined by the artificial boundaries of States—which may be frequently changed—but by those divisions the limits of which are fixed by nature, and where new forms mark the effects of a low latitude and warm climate. In this way America is divided into three parts:—North America, which includes all that country lying north of the tropics; Central or Tropical America, the countries within the tropics; and South America, all that country south of the tropic of Capricorn.

Within the tropical region peculiar forms are presented in every department of nature,—we need only instance the Monkey tribe among the animals, the Parrots among the birds, and the Palms among the plants.

A considerable portion of the country to which our attention has been directed, is at the present period an uncultivated and almost unexplored wild, roamed over by fierceous beasts and warlike tribes of Indians.

The objects of our search, Quadrupeds, are far less numerous than birds at all times, and are, moreover, generally nocturnal in their habits, and consequently obtained with far greater difficulty than the latter.

Although the Genera may be easily ascertained, by the forms and
INTRODUCTION.

dental arrangements peculiar to each, many species so nearly approach each other in size, while they are so variable in colour, that it is exceedingly difficult to separate them, especially closely allied squirrels, hares, mice, shrews, &c., with positive certainty.

We have had our labours lightened, however, by many excellent friends and gentlemen in different portions of the country, who have, at great trouble to themselves, procured and sent us various animals—forwarded to us notes upon the habits of different species, procured works on the subject otherwise beyond our reach, and in many ways excited our warmest feelings of gratitude. Mr. J. K. Townsend, of Philadelphia, allowed us to use the rare and valuable collection of Quadrupeds which he obtained during his laborious researches on the western prairies, the Rocky Mountains, and in Oregon, and furnished us with his notes on their habits and geographical distribution. Spencer F. Baird, Esq., of Carlisle, Pennsyluania, aided us by carefully searching various libraries for notes and information in regard to species published in different journals, and also by obtaining animals from the wilder portions of his State, &c.; Dr. Barratt, of Abbeville, S. C., prepared and mounted specimens of Lepus aquaticus, and several other species; Dr. Thomas M. Brewer, of Boston, favoured us with specimens of a new species of shrew-mole (Scalops Breweri), and sundry arvicola; Edmund Ruffin, Esq., of Virginia, sent us several specimens of the rodentia inhabiting that State, and obliged us by communicating much information in regard to their geographical range; the late Dr. John Wright, of Troy, N. Y., furnished us valuable notes on the various species of quadrupeds found in the northern part of the State of New-York, and several specimens; Dr. Wurbeman, of Charleston, supplied us with several specimens from Cuba, thereby enabling us to compare them with genera and species existing in America. To Professor Lewis R. Gibbes, of the College of Charleston, we express our thanks, for several specimens of rare quadrupeds, and for his kindness in imparting to us much information and scientific knowledge.

Among others to whose zeal and friendship we are most indebted, we are proud to name: Dr. Geo. C. Shattuck and Dr. Geo. Parkman, of
The teeth in animals of this genus, with the exception of there being one less on each side, in the upper jaw, do not differ from the dental arrangement of the genus Felis. The canines are very strong, there are but three molars on each side, above: The small false-molar, next to the canine, which exists in the larger species of long-tailed cats, such as the lion, tiger, panther, cougar, &c., as well as in the domestic or common cat, is wanting in the lynxes. There is one false-molar, or conical tooth on each side—one carnivorous, with three lobes and a tubercle or blunted heel, on the inner. The third cheek-tooth is rather small, and is placed transversely. In the lower jaw there are on each side, two false, compressed, simple molars, and one canine, which is bicusped.

The head is short, round, and arched; jaws short; tongue aculeated; ears short, erect, more or less tufted.

Fore-feet with five toes, hind-feet with only four; nails retractile. Tail shorter than the head, although nearly as long, in a few instances.

The species heretofore classed in the genus Felis have been so multiplied by the discoveries of late years in various parts of the world, that they have for some time demanded a careful examination, and the separation of such as present characters essentially different from the types of that genus, into other genera.

Some of the distinctive marks by which the genus Lynx is separated...

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