

as the moles and bats, have the molars terminated by several



Fig. 74.

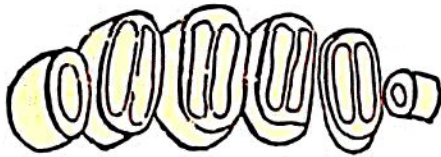


Fig. 76.

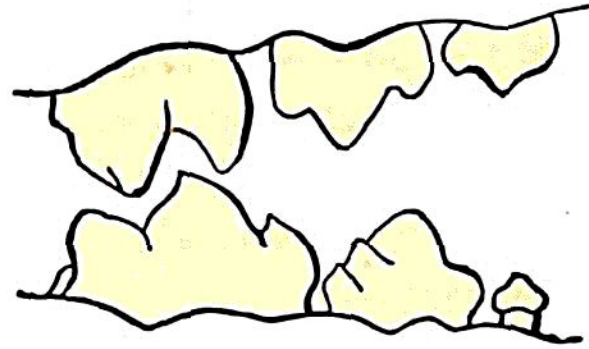


Fig. 75.

sharp, conical points, (Fig. 74,) so arranged that the elevations of one tooth fit exactly into the depressions of the tooth opposite to it. In the true Carnivora, (Fig. 75,) on the contrary, the molars are compressed laterally, so as to have sharp, cutting edges, as in the bats; and they shut by the side of each other, like the blades of scissors, thereby dividing the food with great facility.

220. The same adaptation is observed in the teeth of herbivorous animals. Those which chew the cud, (ruminants,) many of the thick-skinned animals, (pachydermata,) like the elephant, and some of the gnawers, (rodentia,) like the hare, (Fig. 76,) have the summits of the molars flat, like mill-stones, with more or less prominent ridges, for grinding the grass and leaves on which they subsist. Finally, the omnivora, those which feed on both flesh and fruit, like man and the monkeys, have the molars terminating in several rounded tubercles, being thus adapted to the mixed nature of their food.

221. Again, the mode in which the molars are combined with the canines and incisors furnishes excellent means of characterizing families and genera. Even the internal structure of the teeth is so peculiar in each group of animals, and yet subject to such invariable rules, that it is possible to determine with precision the general structure of an animal