

Sub-genera than any other in the Class, which, instead of having no front teeth or incisives, have very conspicuous ones, rendered more so by being separated by a void space from the grinders. From these teeth, which are neither calculated to seize or lacerate their food, but merely to nibble and gnaw it, they have received their name of *Nibblers* or *Gnawers*.*

The great majority of this Order are gregarious, and live in burrows, or common habitations, which they excavate or fabricate themselves. Like the Hymenopterous Class of insects, many are noted for the sagacity and skill which they manifest in their united labours for the good of the community, and also for the organs by which they are enabled to answer the bidding of instinct.

One of the most remarkable of these is the *Beaver*; † this animal has five toes on all its feet, which in the hind pair are connected by membrane; those of the fore-leg, which it uses as a hand to convey its food to its mouth, are very distinct. They carry also with these hands the mud and stones which they mix with the wooden part of their buildings. But their incisor teeth are their principal instruments, with these, as Dr. Richardson states, they cut down trees as big or bigger than a man's thigh; when they undertake this operation they gnaw it all round, cutting it sagaciously on one side higher than on the other, by which it is caused to fall in the direction they wish; they use these powerful organs not only to fell the trees they select, but also to drag them to the place where they want them. It is said, that a beaver, when at its full strength, can at one stroke bite through the leg of a dog.

It has been affirmed that beavers employ their tail both as a trowel to plaster their houses, and as a sledge to carry the trees that they fell; but both these assertions seem to be

* Rodentia.

† *Castor Fiber*.