

§ 9. *Insectivora.*

IN the tribe of *Insectivorous quadrupeds* we meet with several races which present singular conformations. In none are these anomalies more remarkable than in the *mole*, an animal which nature has formed for subterranean residence, and whose limbs are constructed with a view to the rapid excavation of passages under ground. The hands of the mole, for its fore paws almost deserve that appellation, are turned upwards and backwards for scooping the soil, while the feet are employed to throw it out with great quickness. These mining operations are aided by the motions of the head, which is lifted with great power, so as to loosen the ground above, and overcome the resistances that may be opposed to the progress of the animal. That no impediment might be offered to these motions of the head, the spinous processes of the cervical vertebræ have not been suffered to extend upwards. Large muscles are provided for bending the head backwards upon the neck; and they are assisted by a cervical ligament of great strength, which is generally in part ossified. The muscles of the fore extremities are also of extraordinary power. The scapula is a long and slender bone, more resembling a humerus in its shape than an ordinary scapula: the humerus, on the contrary, is thick, and square, and the clavicle is short and broad. The radius and the ulna are distinct from each other; the hand is very large and expanded; the palms being turned outwards and backwards, and its lower margin being fashioned into a sharp cutting edge. The carpal bones and the phalanges of the fingers are very much compressed; but they are furnished with large nails, which compose more than half the hands; and they are expressly constructed for digging, being long, broad, and sharp at the extremities. The sternum has a large middle crest, and is prolonged at its extremity into a sharp process, having the figure of a ploughshare, thus af-