



Shrews

► A VERY small animal with a very large nose is the shrew, whose chief fame arose when Shakespeare applied its name to women of unfortunate and trying disposition. In the eyes of many naturalists, this was grossly unfair to the shrew.

It is true that the little shrew is a nervous mouse-like mammal, addicted to burrowing and possessing both the inquisitive nature and the elongated nose needed for this prying. But in burrowing for food, the shrew performs a useful service. Shrews eat a lot of harmful insects in the ground. They also eat snails, an occasional field mouse, and many an earthworm. Few women care for these dishes, despite their dispositions.

Counted among shrews are the smallest of the world's true mammals, tiny furred

animals which do not weigh as much as a penny. Yet this minute creature can become, on occasion, one of the most ferocious beasts of the woods, pennyweight for pennyweight. When the little shrew can get food no other way, it turns to cannibalism.

Dr. C. H. Merriam, the noted mammalogist, tells of three little shrews he placed together under a tumbler. One was immediately killed and devoured by the other two. Eight hours later, a second had disappeared. The remaining shrew gave evidence of being rather well fed. It had attacked, overcome and ravenously devoured two of its own species, each as big as itself, all within a normal working day.

The shrew is a close cousin of the mole. It even looks like the mole, with small beady eyes so thickly covered with fur that people sometimes claim the animal is blind. In reality, at least one variety of shrew not

only uses its eyes while it is awake, but also while sleeping.

This is the African elephant shrew, so called because its snout is so long that it resembles an elephant's trunk. The assistant director of the National Zoo in Washington, Ernest P. Walker, has a pet elephant shrew which sleeps apparently without ever closing its eyes.

Some shrews are burrowers. Others live among the dead leaves in the forest, moving nervously about all the time. Another African variety thinks it is a kangaroo. It leaps remarkable distances to prove it.

There is a water shrew, sometimes called the "fish mouse." This amphibious creature has been seen to dive to the bottom of an aquarium, dig its long flexible nose into the sand in search of food, and literally standing on its snout, kick its feet to stay in position.

Science News Letter, December 9, 1950

Books of the Week

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A. S. T. M. STANDARDS ON TEXTILE MATERIALS (WITH RELATED INFORMATION): Specifications, Tolerances, Methods of Testing, Definitions and Terms—A. S. T. M. Committee D-13 On Textile Materials—*American Society for Testing Materials*, 572 p., illus., paper, \$4.50.

ACCIDENT HANDBOOK—Compiled by members of the Staff of The Children's Hospital—*Children's Medical Center, Boston*, 20 p., illus., paper, 25 cents. Provides information on what to do in case of home accidents.

AIRPLANE DESIGN MANUAL—Frederick K. Teichmann—*Pitman*, 3rd ed., illus., \$7.50. An introduction to airplane design. A college text brought up-to-date.

ATOMIC BOMBING: How to Protect Yourself—Science Service—*Wise*, 186 p., illus., \$1.95. Methods for protection against the radiation and the blast of an atomic bomb are presented. Such topics as what an A-bomb will do, how to detect radiation, preventing panic, medical first aid and the history of atomic energy are discussed. Members of the staff of Science Service have written this book.

AVIATION FROM THE GROUND UP—John J. Floherty—*Lippincott*, 157 p., illus., \$2.75. A brief history of aviation.

BUTTERFLIES OF GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK—John S. Garth—*Grand Canyon Natural History Association*, 52 p., illus., paper, 75 cents.

THE CHEMICAL ELEMENTS AND THEIR COMPOUNDS, Vol. I & II—N. V. Sidgwick—*Oxford University Press*; Vol I, 853 p.; Vol. II, 848 p.; illus.; \$14.00. Discusses the proper-

ties of the elements and their compounds in the light of new ideas of atomic and molecular structure. Of British origin.

CHILDHOOD AND SOCIETY—Erik H. Erikson—*Norton*, 397 p., illus., \$4.00. Discusses the relationship between childhood training and cultural accomplishment and between childhood fear and social anxiety from the point of view of a child psychoanalyst.

CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE MIGRATION OF BUTTERFLIES—Erik Tetens Nielsen and Astrid Tetens Nielsen—*American Museum of Natural History*, 29 p., illus., paper, 25 cents.

CULTURE IN CRISIS: A Study of the Hopi Indians—Laura Thompson—*Harper*, 221 p., illus., \$4.00. An account of this ethnic group from a multi-discipline viewpoint. The study was made for the purpose of evaluating and planning government policy.

DATE PALM INSECTS IN THE UNITED STATES—Fenner S. Stickney, Dwight F. Barnes and Perez Simmons—*Gov't. Printing Office*, U. S. Dept. of Ag. Circ. No. 846, 57 p., illus.,

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