

observed as far west as California. At the southward, Captain Marcy found it above Cross Timbers, on the Red River of Louisiana. Though not properly included among the mammals of this region, this squirrel has more resemblance to our grey spermophile in color, and to the wood-chuck (*Arctomys monax*) in form, than to any other known to our farmers. Its habits are not unlike those of our grey and striped spermophiles. Like them, it is strictly a prairie animal, subsisting upon plants, and probably on some insects.

The prairie-dogs are fond of each other's company, and live together, in great congregations, their numerous burrows, situated close together, being called "prairie-dog towns." The burrow is much deeper and more extensive than that of either of our two Illinois prairie-squirrels. Like these, it is fond of standing erect near its hole, ventures from it with caution, and hastens into it when alarmed; but, as if it were inquisitive, soon puts out its head again to look at the cause of its fright. Like the rest of the genus, it hibernates. Its note is said to have gained it the name of "Prairie Dog," but its voice can scarcely bear much resemblance to the bark of a dog, and is probably more like the whistling chatter of our grey and striped spermophiles, though perhaps less musical and clear.

Numbers of our common prairie rattlesnakes, (*Crotalophorus tergeminus*), as well as of a small owl, live habitually in the burrows of the prairie-dog. These can hardly be welcome guests of the rightful inhabitants. Though the owl probably feeds chiefly upon insects, it might devour the young; and the rattlesnake certainly does, as well as makes many a meal of the adults.

WOOD-CHUCK, OR GROUND-HOG.

[PLATE X.]

Arctomys monax, LINNÆUS.

DESCRIPTION.—The wood-chuck is about 18 inches in length from the nose to the root of the tail, with the vertebrae of the tail about 4 inches. The tail is bushy, but small; the ears and legs short; the body thick and heavy; a full-sized specimen weighing 9 or 10 pounds. The usual color of the back is grizzly-brown, with the head, tail and feet darker; the belly reddish.

The wood-chuck is familiar to the farmers of the Eastern and Middle States. It is abundant on the Missouri River, and exists westward to the Rocky Mountains. Northward, it is found as far as Hudson's Bay. In this part of Illinois, it was exceedingly rare ten years ago, but is now becoming quite common. It is an inhabitant of the woods, where it occupies the place that the spermophiles do on the prairies; and, though it burrows in open fields, and in the timber, I am not aware that it ever lives on the prairie, though I