

**ALL ABOUT FERRETS AND RATS: A
COMPLETE HISTORY OF FERRETS, RATS,
AND RAT EXTERMINATION
FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AND
STUDY; ALSO A PRACTICAL HAND-
BOOK ON THE FERRET. SECOND EDITION**

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ADOLPH ISAACSEN

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-- ALSO --

A PRACTICAL HAND-BOOK ON THE FERRET.

BY "SURE POP."

(ADOLPH ISAACSEN.)

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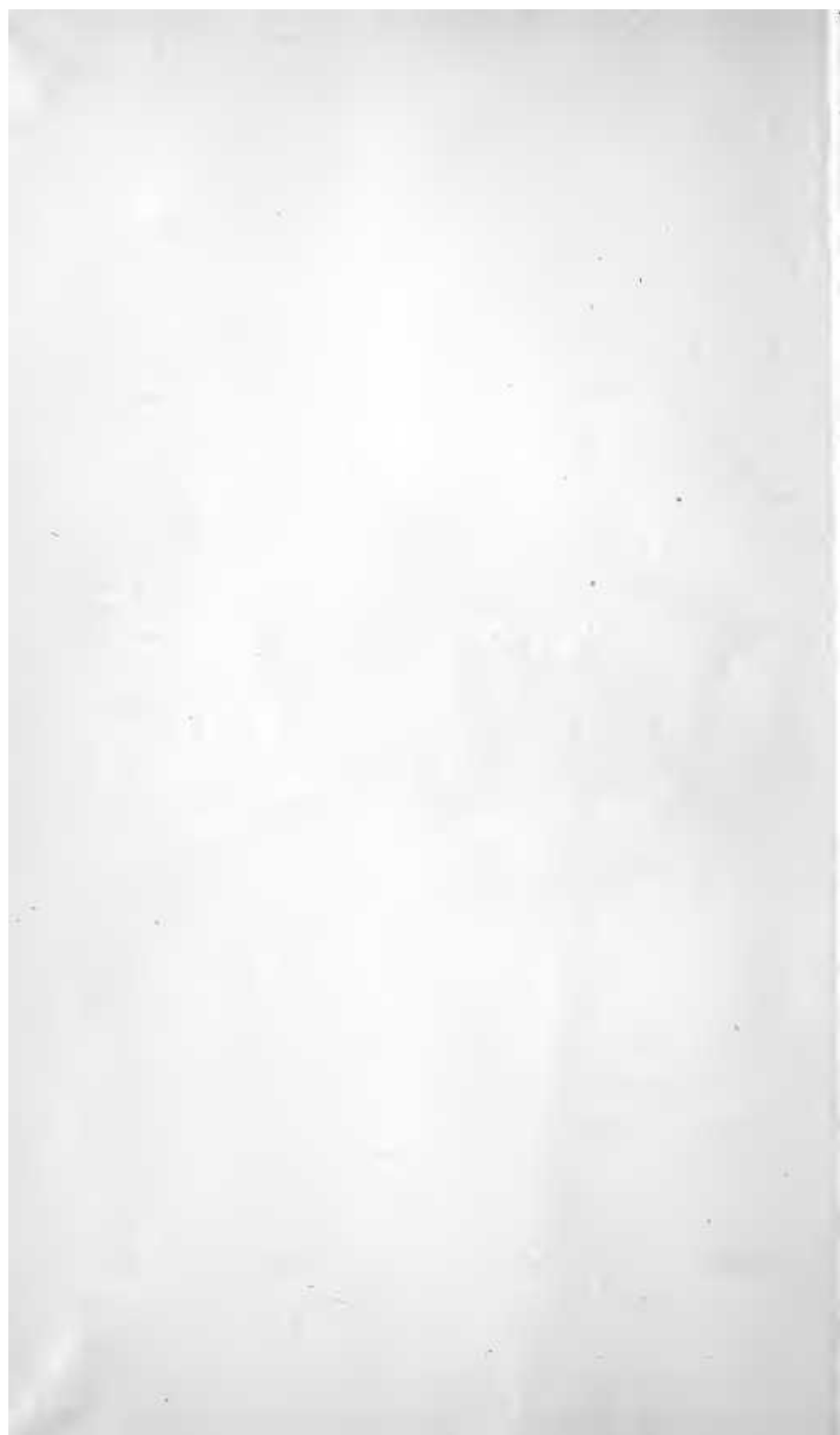


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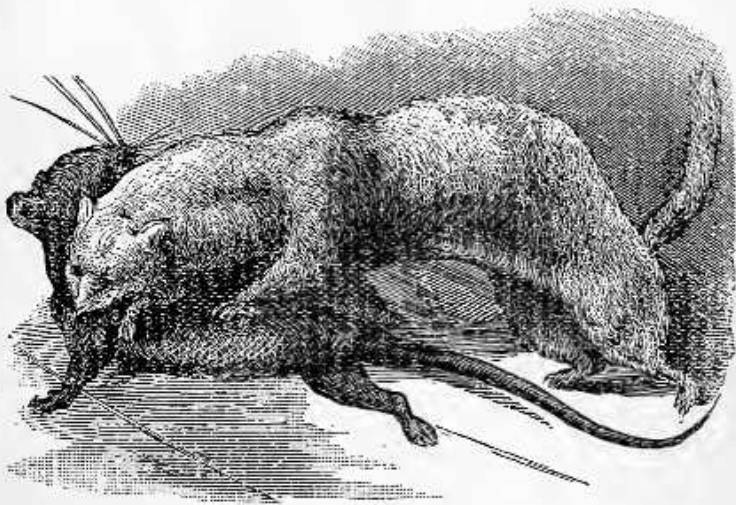
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INTRODUCTORY.

In the following pages we have given a complete review of the ever-important rat exterminating subject, from a practical man's point of view. The essay on the Ferret has been exhaustively treated, is a special feature of the work, and will be found of great value to the rat-ridden part of the community, as well as to the fancier and naturalist. "The Rat" has been handled from a universal point of view, and the book has been prepared from the writer's practical notes during his thirty years' study of Rats and Rat Extermination.



THE FERRET.



I.—WHAT A FERRET IS.

Our dictionaries say that “ferret” as a verb active means to search out carefully. This is certainly an important function of the animal, but, as it belongs to the Musteline or flesh-eating weasel family, it has also inherited these animals’ boldness and savageness, though tempered and exercised in a very useful direction, *i. e.*, of killing off the most bothersome and numerous of our vermin for us. It is rather a well-known family,

the one to which the ferret belongs, including such animals as the sable, which furnishes the highly-prized fur, the skunk, with its not as greatly valued perfume, the ermine, the color of which is likened to the driven snow and whose dress forms the badge of royalty, the weasel, from which artists obtain their finest brushes, the marten, the badger, and the otter. The shape of these animals, the characteristics being strongly marked in the ferret, is long, slender, and serpentine (snake-like and winding), their teeth are very sharp, the muzzle and legs short. Their average food is rats, rabbits, and birds. Members of this class are found in all climates and parts of the earth.

It is necessary to state, primarily, that there is no such thing as a wild ferret; it is domesticated in the same degree as a cat or a dog. The wild animal from which the ferret is bred is the weasel, just as the dog is originally of wolf extraction, and the cat of the same class as the tiger or lion. The ferret is also interbred with the different species of the musteline tribe, such as the mink, marten, polecat, and fitch. These are nevertheless all weasels in the same way that terriers, black and tans, Newfoundlands, and poodles all belong to the family of dogs. The ferret's origin has been traced by some to Spain, by others again to the northwestern part of Africa, and by still different writers as far away from us as Egypt, but it was first used authentically for ratting and rabbiting in Great Britain, where it is most highly prized, its merits understood, and where almost every one is as familiar with it as he is with the nature of his house cat. The public here in America is yet but indifferently acquainted with the ferret. At an exhibition of ferrets made by the writer at Madison

Square Garden there was about one out of every fifteen persons that knew the name of the animal at all, and the ferrets were alternately designated as skunks, weasels, guinea-pigs, raccoons, monkeys, woodchucks, kittens, puppies, squirrels, rabbits, chipmunks, rats (an animal for which they are commonly mistaken), hares, martens, otters, small kangaroos, maskrats, beavers, seals, and, ridiculous as it may seem, small bears. The American race of ferrets has been bred to a high degree of intelligence, as the proper medium of wildness in the hunt and docility to its keeper has been obtained principally through the efforts of the present writer. This, however, has only been brought about after a great deal of close study and experiment in cross breeding, until now the American animal is greatly preferable to its more sluggish and vicious English brother.

II.—CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE.

Every individual ferret has a character and distinct look of its own, although there are some ugly, scarred, and bony specimens with game legs and glass eyes, still the ferret, when in good condition, is a pretty little animal, with soft fur and kittenish ways, and can be handled and fondled after you have become mutually acquainted, the same as a cat. It can never be made as trustworthy as a dog, because it does not possess as much intelligence. The general colors are white, yellow, and a mixture of black, brown, gray, and tan, varied with gray and white patches over and under the neck and body. *The tint runs according to the predominance of either mink, marten, fitch, or polecat blood.* The ferret is essentially a *useful* animal, and