

specimens of *O. degus* when he returned to Europe, Dr. v. Frantzius unhesitatingly referred his lost specimen to that species*. It appears to me, however, that the above description might apply as well to a *Hesperomys* of the subgenus *Nyctomys*† as to an *Octodon*.

As far as I am aware, no species of *Octodon* has yet been met with further north than the Peruvian Andes, while the *Coypu* does not appear to advance beyond Central Chili‡. Both forms are highly characteristic of the Patagonian subregion; and their occurrence in Central America is extremely improbable.

Fam. V. HYSTRICIDÆ.

1. SYNETHERES.

Coendu, Lacépède, Mém. de l'Inst. Nat. iii. p. 496 (1801)§.

Synetheres et *Sphiggurus*, Fréd. Cuvier, Mém. du Mus. ix. p. 427 (1822)||.

Cercolabes, Brandt, Mém. Ac. Pétersb. (6^{me} sér.) iii. p. 391 (1835).

Of the three American genera of Porcupines constituting the subfamily Synetherinæ, the typical genus *Synetheres* is clad with short spines more or less mixed with long harsh hair, and has a long prehensile tail. The hind feet have only four toes, but their soles are expanded on the inner edge by a broad lobe which is supported by two accessory tarsal ossicles.

All the species are Neotropical, their place being taken in North America by the allied genus *Erethizon*. The only one found in Central America, *Synetheres mexicanus*, belongs to the section or subgenus *Sphingurus*, in which the spines are hidden by the long hair. It is at once distinguished from its nearest allies, *S. villosus*, F. Cuvier, and *S. melanurus*, Wagner, by its black colour and by the tufts of spiny bristles which are concealed by the fur of its lower parts. The length of the head and body is about 20" to 22", and of the tail 12" to 16".

* *Tom. cit.* pp. 275, 276.

† *Cf. supra*, p. 143.

‡ Dr. v. Tschudi included *Myopotamus coypus* as a Peruvian animal in his 'Mammalium Conspectus' (Arch. f. Naturg. x. 1, p. 252), but afterwards withdrew it as unauthenticated ('Fauna Peruana,' p. 184).

§ *Cf. supra*, p. 3, footnote.

|| The laws of nomenclature requiring that one of Cuvier's names should be retained for this genus, which Brandt had shown to be indivisible, I formerly preferred to use his second title, in an amended form, and called the subfamily Sphingurinae (P.Z.S. 1876, p. 93). But Mr. J. A. Allen has since pointed out (Mon. N.-Am. Rodent. p. 385) that Gervais had already founded the group on *Synetheres* (Zool. et Paléont. Franç. p. 18); and it is evident that his example should be followed to prevent confusion.