

under which they are brought forth, they remain prisoners in the midst of an extended space, unable to move more than three feet in an hour; they climb with difficulty and pain; and their plaintive and interrupted cry they dare only utter by night. All these circumstances announce their wretchedness, and call to our mind those imperfect sketches of Nature, which, having scarcely the power to exist, only remained a short time in the world, and then were effaced from the list of beings. In fact, if it were not a desert country where the sloths exist, but had been long inhabited by man and powerful animals, they would not have descended to our time; the whole species would have been destroyed, as at some future period will certainly be the case. We have already observed, that it seems as if all that *could* be, *does* exist; and of this the sloths appear to be a striking proof. They constitute the last term of existence in the order of animals endowed with flesh and blood. One more defect and they could not have existed. To look on these unfinished creatures as equally perfect beings with others; to admit final causes for such disparities, and from thence to determine Nature to be as brilliant in these as in her most beautiful animals, is only looking  
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