

and the nearer extremity of the farthest bone presses the ground in the ordinary running of the animal, while the claw is retracted into a sheath : but when the creature makes a spring and strikes, the claws are uncased by the action of the flexors or bending tendons. In the Bengal tiger, the claws are so sharp and strong, and the arms so powerful, that they have been known to fracture the skull of a man, by a single touch in the act of leaping over him.\* A cat affords a familiar illustration of this peculiarity of structure; when pleased, its claws are retracted, and when angry they are thrown out. In the claw of the megalonyx there is no such lateral provision for its retraction, and the point could not have been raised vertically, as in the cat, so as to have permitted it to touch the ground without injury. The articulating surface is double, that is, there is a ridge or spine in the middle, and it must, therefore, have moved like a hinge.

25. THE SLOTH.—There is among recent animals an order called *tardigrada*, from their feeble power of progression—these are the *paresseux*, or sloths; which have long toes, and large nails, of a construction similar to those of the fossil. Their nails are folded up, but in a very different manner from those of the cat; they only enable the animal to walk, in the same way as if our fingers were folded under the palms of the hands. This is a

\* Sir C. Bell.