

the power of contraction is a vital property. The continued action of a muscle, therefore, exhausts the vitality; and to support that action, when it is inordinate, there must be a more than usual provision for the supply of this living power, viz:—a means of increasing or maintaining the circulation of the blood, which is the source of all vital power.

In the *loris tardigradus** it has been observed that the axillary and femoral arteries, the great arteries of the anterior and posterior extremities, have this peculiarity—that the main vessel is sub-divided into a number of equal-sized cylinders, which again unite to form a single trunk previous to the distribution of its branches to the muscles.† It has been argued that this peculiarity, as it produces a retardation of the blood, is adapted to the slow motion of the animal. I believe it to be a provision for long continued action; because the animals which possess it, are not more remarkable for the slowness of their progression than for the tenacity of their hold: the extremities are long and the muscles powerful, either for sustaining the animal by grasping the branches of trees, or for digging; but surely the strength of the muscles cannot be produced by retardation of the cir-

* See the Appendix, Division I. Quadrumana.

† There is some doubt as to the reunion of the vessels.