

malous conditions are so far from being defects, or sources of inconvenience in the Sloth, that they afford striking illustrations of the varied contrivances, whereby the structure of every creature is harmoniously adapted to the state in which it was destined to live. The peculiarities of the Sloth, that render its movements so awkward on the earth, are fitted with much advantage to its destined office of living entirely upon trees, and feeding upon their leaves : so also, if we consider the *Megatherium* with a view to its province of digging and feeding upon roots, we shall, in this habit, discover the explanation of its unusual structure, and apparently incongruous proportions ; and find, in every organ, a relation of obvious convenience, and of adaptation to the office it had to discharge.*

It will be my present object to enter into such a minute investigation of some of the more remarkable parts of this animal, viewing them with a constant reference to a peculiar mode of life, as may lead to the recognition of a system of well

* The remains of the *Megatherium* have been found chiefly in the southern regions of America, and most abundantly in Paraguay ; it appears also to have extended on the north of the equator as far as the United States. We have, for some time, possessed detailed descriptions of this animal by Cuvier, *Oss. Foss.* vol. 5. and a series of large engravings, by Pander and D'Alton, taken from a nearly perfect skeleton, sent in 1789 from Buenos Ayres to Madrid. Dr. Mitchell and Mr. Cooper have described, in the *Annals of the Lyceum of Nat. Hist. of New York*, May, 1824, some teeth and bones found in the marshes of