

in harmonious subordination to this chief purpose in the animal economy.

In the case of ordinary animals, the passage from one form to another is so gradual, and the functions of one species receive such ample and obvious illustrations from those of the species adjacent to it, that we are rarely at a loss, to see the final cause of almost every arrangement that is presented to the anatomist. This is more especially the case with respect to the skeleton, which forms the foundation of all the other mechanisms within the body, and is of the highest importance in the history of fossil animals, of which we rarely find any other remains besides the bones, and teeth, and the scaly or osseous integuments. I select the *Megatherium*, because it affords an example of most extraordinary deviations, and of egregious apparent monstrosity; viz. the case of a gigantic animal exceeding the largest *Rhinoceros* in bulk, and to which the nearest approximations that occur in the living world, are found in the not less anomalous genera of Sloth, Armadillo, and *Chlamyphorus*; the former adapted to the peculiar habit of residing upon trees; the two latter constructed with unusual adaptations to the habit of burrowing in search of their food and shelter in sand; and all limited in their geographical distribution, nearly to the same regions of America that were once the residence of the *Megatherium*.