

IV. FOSSIL EDENTATA.\*—The remains of extinct colossal mammalia, related to the existing diminutive SLOTHS in the essential characters of their organization, but modified to suit the peculiar conditions in which they were placed, and the enormous increase in bulk of their colossal frames, are strewn all over the vast area of those alluvial plains of South America, called the PAMPAS (*Wond.* p. 154.). The deposits of these regions consist of—1. Beds of clay, sand, and limestone, containing marine shells and teeth of sharks; these are the lowermost strata. 2. Indurated marl. 3. Red clayey earth with calcareous concretions, in which the bones of colossal terrestrial mammalia are abundant. This vertical section demonstrates, that an extensive bay of salt-water was gradually encroached upon, and at length converted into a muddy estuary, by detritus brought down from the interior of the country, and in which carcasses of land animals floated, and ultimately became engulfed in the silt. It is in these last deposits, which now form the immediate subsoil of the Pampas, that the teeth of the *Megatherium*, *Myiodon*, gigantic Armadillo, Mastodon, Horse, &c. have been found.†

The MEGATHERIUM (*Wond.* p. 153. *Bd.* p. 139, and pl. 5.) is the best known to the general reader,

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\* So named from the absence of teeth in the fore-part of the jaws.

† See the charming volume entitled, "Journal of the Voyage of H. M. S. Beagle," by *Charles Darwin, Esq.*