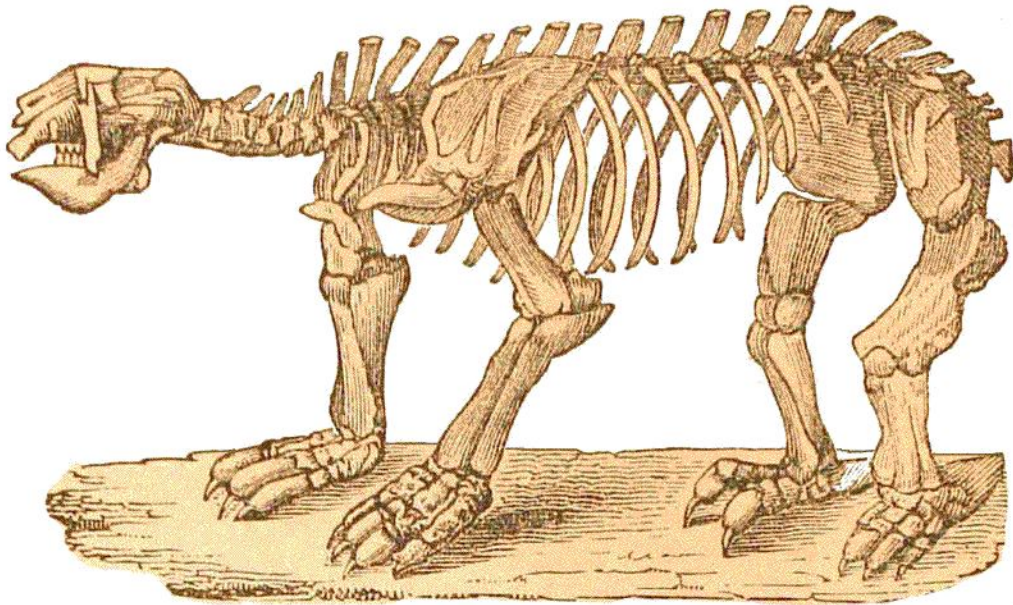


Fig. 403.

*Megatherium.*

In the superficial deposits of South America several other interesting extinct animals have been found, belonging mostly to the Pachydermata, or thick-skinned, and the Edentata. The *Toxodon*, which had a skull twenty-eight inches in length, approximates in its structure to several families of animals, viz., the Rodentia, the Ruminantia, and Cetacea; although, in fact, a Pachyderm. The *Macrauchenia* greatly resembled the llama, and had a neck almost as long as that of the giraffe, with a body nearly as large as that of the rhinoceros. This, also, was a Pachyderm. The *Mylodon*, an Edentate animal, was of massive and singular proportions. Its body was shorter than that of the hippopotamus, but was terminated by a pelvis as broad as that of the elephant and deeper, resting on two massive but short hind legs, with feet as long as the thigh bones. The tail, as long as the legs, and very thick and strong, was probably used like that of the kangaroo, to support the body when the animal raised up its anterior extremities. It is supposed by Mr. Owen that the peculiar structure of this animal adapted it, first for digging around trees, and then, resting upon the tripod base of its hind legs and tail, it seized the trunk with its fore legs, and rocked it to and fro until it was prostrated, and its leaves furnished food for several days, perhaps. The following sketch will give a good idea of this animal. (Fig. 404.) The *Scelidotherium* was an analogous animal not larger than some of the existing anteaters of South America, but with excessively large hind legs. These animals are all called Megatheroids, because they resemble the *Megatherium*.

*Megalonyx*.—This animal was first described by Thomas Jefferson. It was found in the nitre caverns of Virginia and Kentucky, and has since been discovered in other places. It was of the size of the ox, and appears to have been nearly related to the sloth.

As a contrast to the gigantic animals above described, we ought to mention those microscopic organisms that have gone by the name of Infusoria. The opinion seems to be gaining ground that the larger part of them are vegetables; but the astonishing facts as to their minuteness and rapid increase, as discovered by Ehrenberg, the great master of the microscope, still remain true. They occur most abundantly in very recent deposits, forming beds be-