

the condition which authorizes such an expression as "the bungled and faulty composition of the sloth." But when he reaches the branch or the rough bark of a tree, his progress is rapid; he climbs hand over head along the branches till they touch, and thus from bough to bough, and from tree to tree; he is most alive in the storm, and when the wind blows, and the trees stoop, and the branches wave and meet, he is then upon the march.

The compassion expressed by these philosophers for animals,* which they consider imperfectly organized, is uncalled for; as well might they pity the larva of the summer fly, which creeps in the bottom of a pool, because it cannot yet rise upon the wing. As the insect has no impulse to fly until the metamorphosis is perfect, and the wings developed, so we have no reason to suppose that a disposition or instinct is given to animals without a corresponding provision for motion. The sloth may move tardily on the ground, his long arms and his preposterous claws may be an incumbrance, but they are of advantage in his natural place, among the branches of trees, in obtaining his food, and in giving him shelter and safety from his enemies.

We must not estimate the slow motions of animals by our own sensations. The motion of the bill of the swallow, or the fly-catcher, in

* The subject is pursued at the end of the following chapter.