

*dwarf sloths* (Bradypoda), and of the extinct unwieldy *giant sloths* (Gravigrada). The enormous fossil remains of these colossal herbivora suggest that the whole legion is becoming extinct, and that the Edentata of the present day are but a poor remnant of the mighty order of the diluvial period. The close relations between the still living South American Edentata and the extinct gigantic forms which are found beside the latter on the same part of the globe, made such an impression upon Darwin on his first visit to South America, that they even then suggested to him the fundamental idea of the Theory of Descent. (See above, vol. i. p. 134). But it is precisely the genealogy of this legion which is most difficult. The Edentata are perhaps nothing but a peculiarly developed lateral branch of the Ungulata; but it may also be that their root lies in quite another direction.

We now leave the first main group of Placental animals, the Indeciduata, and turn to the second main group, namely, the Deciduata, or animals with decidua, which are distinguished from the former by possessing a deciduous membrane, or decidua, during their embryonal life. We here meet with a very remarkable small group of animals, for the most part extinct, and which probably were the old tertiary (or eocene) ancestors of man. These are the Semi-apes, or Lemurs (Prosimiæ); these curious animals are probably the but little changed descendants of the primæval group of Placentalia which we have to consider as the common primary form of all Deciduata. They have hitherto been classed together in the same order with Apes which Blumenbach called Quadrumana (four-handed). However, I regard them as entirely distinct from these, not