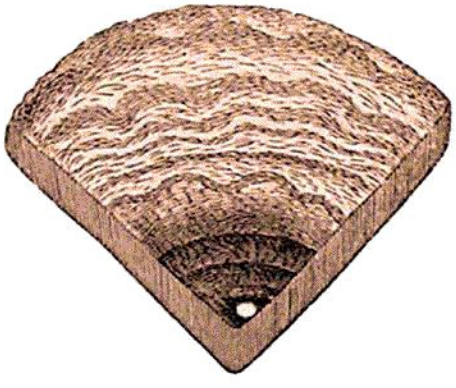
more or less compactly pressed according to the nature of the species. (Fig. 21.) The whole section presents a certain resemblance to a similar section of a dicotyledonous tree: (Fig. 20.) the medulla in position and outward appearance is a pith; the horny axis is the wood; and the fleshy crust has been denominated the bark;*—nor perhaps could fault be found with this language, since it is sufficiently illustrative, had it not been the mother of some very erroneous notions, and a great means of their propagation and continuance. Thus Linnæus, in his definition of Gorgonia, calls the axis a vegetating stem; and as if this was not sufficiently explicit, we find Pallas entering into detail and telling us that the concentric circles are produced by successive transmutations of the fleshy crust, in the same manner that the circles of the wood of trees are formed by transformations of the inner layers of the bark.† And this opinion, if we may judge from their language, has been adopted by many, and even recent, authors, though Ellis had previous to its promulgation‡,

Fig. 20.

Fig. 21.



and also shortly afterwards, demonstrated that there was not only no real resemblance, but such remarkable differences as rendered the hypothesis altogether untenable.§ The pith of

* Lin. Syst. 1289.

† Elench. p. 162. He seems, however, to have had his suspicions that the theory was questionable, for he adds—"Quanquam diversissima corticis natura, ejusdemque facilis a ligno separatio, suggerere possent: hujus strata potius ex deposito intus succo fieri, aut lignum, prout ossa animalium sanguineorum intra periosteum, generari, augeri, durescere."

‡ Coral. 65. Lin. Corresp. i. 225. Phil. Trans. (an. 1776) abridg. xiii. 721.

§ What then could induce Blumenbach, so late as in 1825, to write thus?—"The stems appear to be *really vegetables* (the woody nature of which in the larger ones cannot be mistaken) incrusted with corals."—Man. of Nat. Hist. Trans. p. 271.