

place before you a few of the usual forms that occur in the British coal-measures, which will serve to convey a general idea of the nature of the carboniferous flora all over the world; for it is a remarkable fact, that the fossil plants found in the coal mines of Europe, are for the most part perfectly identical with those that occur in the coal of North America, Australia, and even of Greenland; all belonging to the same genera.*

33. FOSSIL MARE'S-TAIL, OR EQUISETUM.—The mare's-tail (*equisetum fluviatile*) of our marshes and ditches, is an elegant plant, having a succulent, erect, jointed stem, with attenuated foliage growing in whorls around the joints, the latter being protected by a distinct striated sheath; the parts of fructification constitute a scaly catkin at the apex of the stem. There are ten species of this genus, eight of which are natives of England; the stem of the largest does not exceed half an inch in diameter. In the coal-measures remains of this genus occur in abundance, and are referable to many gigantic species, some of the stems being fourteen inches in diameter. The *equisetum columnare*, a fossil of constant occurrence in the carboniferous strata, is beautifully figured and illustrated by M. Ad. Brongniart.†

34. FOSSIL FERNS (Tab. 123).—The *brake*, or fern, of our commons and waste lands, is a familiar

* Adolphe Brongniart, Prodrome d'une Histoire des Veg. Foss.

† Végétaux Fossiles, tom. i. pl. 13.