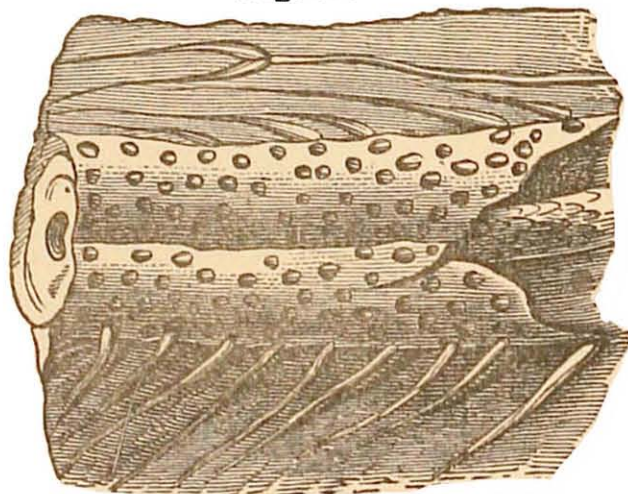


rious genus attracted notice, from their singularity, long ere their connection with the carved and fluted stems had been determined, and have been often described as the “stigmata” of the fossil botanist. They, too, have their curious

Fig. 31.



STIGMARIA FICOIDES.  
(One-fourth nat. size.)

carvings, consisting of deeply marked stigmata, quincuncially arranged, with each a little ring at its bottom, and, in at least one rare species, surrounded by a sculptured star. Unlike true roots, they terminate abruptly: each rootlet which they sent forth was jointed to the little ring or dimpled knob at the bottom of the stigmata; and the appearance of the whole, as it radiated from the central mass, whence the carved trunk proceeded, somewhat resembled that of an enormous coach-wheel divested of the rim. Unfortunately we cannot yet complete our description of this strange plant. A specimen, traced for about forty feet across a shale bed, was found to bifurcate atop into two great branches,—a characteristic in which, with several others, it differed from most of the tree ferns,—a class of plants to which Adolphe Brogniart is inclined to deem it related; but no specimen has yet shown the nature of its foliage. I am, however, not a little disposed to believe with Brogniart that it may have borne as leaves some of the supposed ferns of the Coal Measures: nowhere,