

PLATE 26<sup>a</sup>.

Ornithichnites, or foot-marks of several extinct species of birds, found in the New Red sandstone of the Valley of the Connecticut.\* (Hitchcock.)

\* In the American Journal of Science and Arts, January, 1836. V. XXIX. No. 2. Professor Hitchcock has published a most interesting account of his recent discovery of *Ornithichnites*, or foot-marks of birds in the New Red sandstone of the valley of the Connecticut. These tracks have been found at various depths beneath the actual surface, in quarries of laminated flag stones, at five places near the banks of this river, within a distance of thirty miles. The sandstone is inclined from 5°, to 30°, and the Tracks appear to have been made on it before the strata received their inclination. Seven of these tracks occur in three or four quarries within the space of a few rods square; they are so distinct, that he considers them to have been made by as many different species, if not genera, of birds. (See Pl. 26<sup>a</sup>, Figs. 1—14.)

The footsteps appear in regular succession, on the continuous track of an animal in the act of walking or running, with the right and left foot always in their relative places.

The distance of the intervals between each footstep on the same track is occasionally varied, but to no greater amount than may be explained by the Bird having altered its pace. Many tracks of different individuals and different species are often found crossing one another; they are sometimes crowded like impressions of feet on the muddy shores of a stream, or pond, where Ducks and Geese resort. (See Pl. 26<sup>a</sup>. Figs. 12. 13. 14.)

None of the footsteps appear to be those of Web-footed Birds; they most nearly resemble those of Grallæ, (Waders) or birds whose habits resemble those of Grallæ. The impressions of three toes are usually distinct, except in a few instances; that of the fourth or hind toe is mostly wanting, as in the footsteps of modern Grallæ.

The most remarkable among these footsteps, are those of a gigantic bird, twice the size of an Ostrich, whose foot measured fifteen inches in length, exclusive of the largest claw, which measured two inches. All the three toes were broad and thick. (Pl. 26<sup>a</sup>. Fig. 1. and Pl. 26<sup>b</sup>. Fig. 1.) These largest footsteps have as yet been found in one quarry only, at Mount Tom near Northampton; here, four nearly parallel tracks of this kind were discovered, and in one of them six footsteps appeared in regular succession, at the distance of