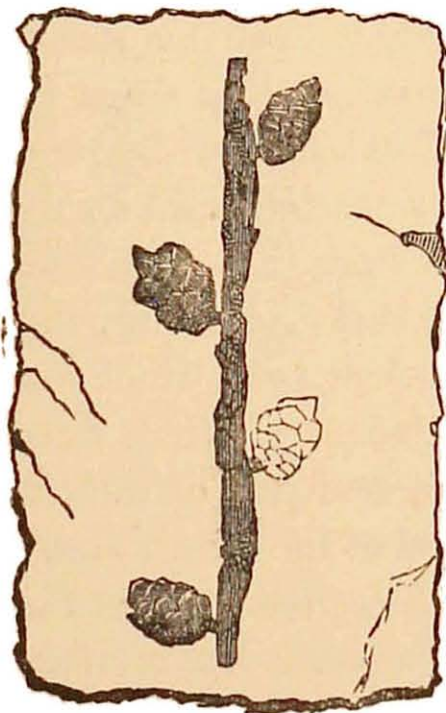


they are locked up in a hard limestone that clings closely around their scales, and from the further circumstance that the semi-calcareous lignite into which they are resolved is softer and less tenacious than the inclosing matrix, present, when laid open, not their outer surfaces, but mere sections of their interior ; and give, in consequence, save in their general proportions and outline, but few specific marks by which to distinguish them. We see, however, in some cases in these sections what would be otherwise unseen,—the flat naked seeds lying embedded in their hollow receptacles between the scales, and in as perfect a state of keeping as the seeds of recent pines that had ripened only a twelvemonth ago. Had not the vitality of seeds its limits in time, like life of all other kinds, one might commit these perfect fossil germs to the soil, in the hope of seeing the old extinct forests called, through their agency, a second time into existence. Of three apparent species of cones which occur in the Eathie Lias, the smallest seems to have resembled in size and appearance that of the Scotch fir ; the largest, which consisted, from bottom to top, as seen in section, of from nine to ten scales, appears

Fig. 132.



to have been more in the proportions of the oblong oval cones of the spruce family ; while a cone of intermediate length, but of considerably greater breadth, assumed the rounded form of the cones of the cedar. I have found in the same deposit what seems to be the sprig of a conifer, with four apparently embryo cones attached to it in the alternate order. These are rather more sessile than the young cones of the larch ; but the aspect of the