

which are of greatest importance in a geological point of view, the *POLYCYSTINA* and the *ACANTHOMETRINA*, the skeleton is much more regular and complete. In the former it consists of a delicate external shell of silica, minutely fenestrated, and often presenting very remarkable and beautiful forms (Fig. 52); in the latter it is essentially internal, and is formed of a varying number of siliceous spicules, radiating from a centre round which the sarcode is accumulated (Fig. 53). The spicules are often most elegantly ornamented; and in an intermediate family, the *Haliommatidæ*, they give off a set of anastomosing branches, which form one or several concentric lacey shells which invest the sarcode nucleus (Fig. 54).

The observation of the great abundance of Radiolarian tests at great depths led to the reconsideration of the deposits from the deepest soundings; and Mr. Murray now believes, and in this I entirely agree with him, that shortly after the red clay has assumed its most characteristic form, by the total removal of the calcareous shells of the foraminifera, at a depth of say 3000 fathoms, the deposit in many cases begins gradually to alter again, by the increasing proportion of the shells of Radiolarians, until, at such extreme depths as that of the sounding of the 23d of March, it has once more assumed the character of an almost purely organic formation—the shells of which it is chiefly composed being, however, in this case siliceous, while in the

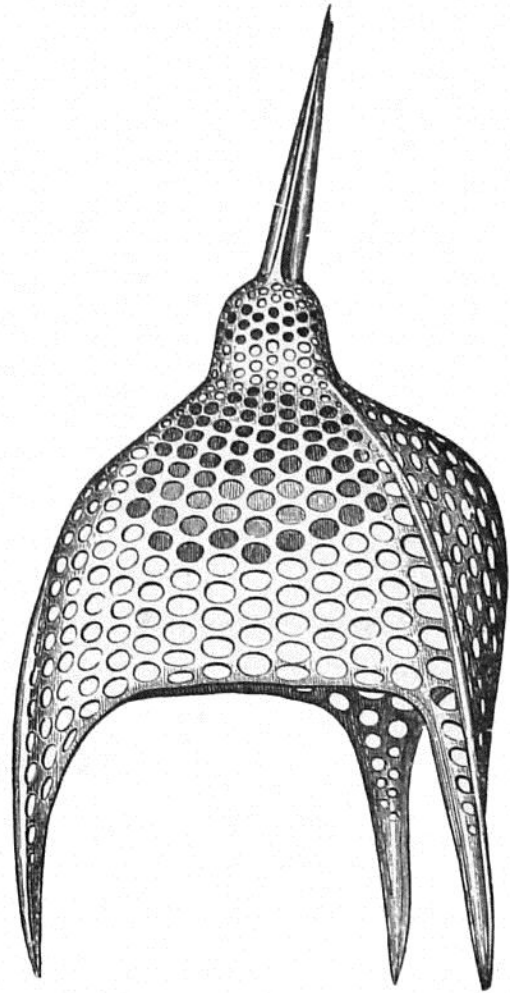


FIG. 52.—*Dictyopodium* (sp. n.). From the surface. Two hundred times the natural size.