

*Suberites ramulosus*, Ridley and Dendy.

1886. *Suberites ramulosa*, Ridley and Dendy, Ann. and Mag. Nat. Hist., ser. 5, vol. xviii. p. 487.

Sponge stipitate, stalk slender, often crooked, simple or branched; ending below, in perfect specimens, in spreading rootlets, and expanding above into a pear-shaped head (none of the five specimens present exhibit more than one head, though two show branching of the stem, but there can be little doubt that several heads may be present, as described in the variety below, of which a much more perfect series of specimens is to hand). Size variable; the largest specimen has a stem 44 mm. long by about 1.5 mm. thick, and a head about 13 mm. long by 8 mm. broad. *Texture* rather soft and spongy, surface hispid. *Oscula*; a single one at the summit of each head, surrounded by a slight spicular fringe.

*Skeleton*.—Very irregular; a dense central axis of longitudinally placed, large tylostylote spicules in the stem, and in the head longitudinal tracts of similar spicules, with loose brushes of smaller ones whose points project beyond the surface and give rise to the hispidity; (compare the description of the skeleton in the variety given below, where it seems to be much more definitely arranged).

*Spicules*.—*Megasclera*; (1) large, straight, stout, fusiform tylostyli, with well-developed subglobular heads and (usually) blunt apices; size about 1.8 by 0.063 mm. (in the stem they may be a little longer and slenderer). (2) Much smaller and slenderer, long, straight, usually sharply pointed tylostyli, with well-marked, nearly globular heads; these spicules form the brushes at the surface of the sponge; their size is very variable, they commonly measure about 1.0 by 0.028 mm., but it would not be difficult to pick out a series connecting them with the larger kind. In the stem the spicules are frequently very crooked, calling to mind those of some Axinellidæ.

The chief point of interest in this species, apart from the branching of the stem, lies in its relation to a well-marked variety of the same from a neighbouring station, which is fully described below; the comparison of these two forms shows how little reliance can be placed on slight differences in the form of the megasclera, that is, whether "stylote," "strongylote," or "tylostylote," for purposes of classification. We have chosen to consider the form described above as the type, because its spicules, in the presence of well-developed heads, agree with those of more typical species of *Suberites*, while the larger spicules of the variety differ from them in this respect. The species is further of exceptional interest owing to the manner in which the external form simulates that of *Stylocordyla*.

*Locality*.—Station 207, January 16, 1875; lat. 12° 21' N., long. 122° 15' E.; Philippine Islands; depth, 700 fathoms; bottom, blue mud; bottom temperature, 51° 6. Five specimens.