

shire, and attended with numerous outlying, or detached masses. To render the course and position of the lias in this quarter intelligible, it is necessary to state, that this district is occupied by three great basins of the coal formation, encircled by the subjacent rocks of limestone and old red sandstone (see *Map*, Pl. X.), to be noticed in a subsequent lecture. The edges of these basins consist of strata thrown up at a high angle, and often nearly vertical, forming bold and precipitous ranges of hills; in the valleys, horizontal strata of lias, with subjacent beds of red marl, are seen lying unconformably (*definition*, page 192) upon the highly inclined strata of the coal measures (Mendip hills, Pl. IX, 2). I shall recur to this subject hereafter, and now only observe, that the lias is seen beneath the oolite through the south-east of Somersetshire, and passes into Dorsetshire, where the overlying strata of the Shanklin sand conceal it beneath the high range of the Black Down hills. At Lyme it forms a range of cliffs, about four miles in length, and may be traced till it gradually sinks beneath the inferior oolite. The fossil skeletons of large marine reptiles, for which the lias is celebrated, have principally been found in the cliffs at Lyme, Watchett, Westbury, and Whitby, where the natural sections, formed by the action of the waves, exhibit the characters of the strata, and afford abundance of fossil remains. The lias appears in the western isles of Scotland, and on the north-east coast of Ireland.