

pleted. I passed direct through Wolverhampton, — a large but rather uninteresting assemblage of red-brick houses, copped with red-tile roofs, slippered with red-tile floors, and neither in its component parts nor in its grouping differing in any perceptible degree from several scores of the other assemblages of red-brick houses that form the busier market-towns of England. The town has been built in the neighborhood of the Dudley coal-basin, on an incoherent lower deposit of New Red Sandstone, unfitted for the purposes of the stone-mason, but peculiarly well suited, in some of its superficial argillaceous beds, for those of the brick-maker. Hence the prevailing color and character of the place ; and such, in kind, are the circumstances that impart to the great majority of English towns so very different an aspect from that borne by our Scottish ones. They are the towns of a brick and tile manufacturing country, rich in coal and clay, but singularly poor in sandstone quarries.

I took the Dudley road, and left the scattered suburbs of the town but a few hundred yards behind me, when the altered appearance of the country gave evidence that I had quitted the New Red Sandstone, and had entered on the Coal Measures. On the right, scarce a gun-shot from the way-side, there stretched away a rich though comparatively thinly-inhabited country, — green, undulated, lined thickly, lengthwise and athwart, with luxuriant hedge-rows, sparsely sprinkled with farm-houses, and over-canopied this morning by a clear blue sky ; while on the left, far as the eye could penetrate through a mud-colored atmosphere of smoke and culm, there spread out a barren uneven wilderness of slag and shale, the debris of lime-kilns and smelting works, and of coal and ironstone pits ; and amid the dun haze there stood up what seemed a continuous city of fire-belching furnaces and smoke-vomiting