

and still greater depths, the mineral treasures of the coal-field; the ever-resounding, ever-smoking village added house to house and forge to forge, as the fuel and the ironstone heaps accumulated; till at length the three thick bands of dark ore, and the ten-yard coal-seam of the basin, though restricted to a space greatly less in area than some of our Scottish lakes, produced, out of the few congregated huts, the busy town of Birmingham, with its two hundred and twenty thousand inhabitants. And as the rise of the place has been connected with the development of the mineral treasures of its small but exceedingly rich coal-field, their exhaustion, unless there open up to it new fields of industry, must induce its decline. There is a day coming, though a still distant one, when the miner shall have done with this wilderness of debris and chimneys, just as the charcoal-burner had done with it when the woodlands were exhausted ages ago, or as the farmer had done with it at a considerably later period; and when it shall exist as an uninhabited desert, full of gloomy pitfalls, half-hidden by a stunted vegetation, and studded with unseemly ruins of brick; and the neighboring city, like a beggared spendthrift, that, after having run through his patrimony, continues to reside in the house of his ancestors, shall have, in all probability, to shut up many an apartment, and leave many a forsaken range of offices and out-houses to sink into decay.

The road began to ascend from the low platform of the coal-field, along the shoulder of a green hill that rises some six or seven hundred feet over the level of the sea, — no inconsiderable elevation in this part of the kingdom. There were no longer heaps of dark-colored debris on either hand; and I saw for the first time in England, where there had been a cutting into the acclivity, to lower the angle of the ascent, a section of rock much resembling our Scotch grauwacke of the southern