

by and by attempt imparting to the reader, from some commanding summit of the Clent range, a few general views regarding the geology of the landscape; and by first bearing me company on my visit to Droitwich, he will be the better able to keep pace with me in my after survey.

The prevailing geological system in this part of England is the New Red Sandstone, Upper and Lower. It stretches for many miles around the Dudley coal-basin, much in the way that the shires of Stirling and Dumbarton stretch around the waters of Loch Lomond, or the moors of Sutherland or the hills of Inverness-shire encircle the waters of Loch Shin or Loch Ness. In the immediate neighborhood of the basin we find only the formations of the lower division of the system, and these are of comparatively little economic value: they contain, however, a calcareous conglomerate, which represents the magnesian limestone of the northern counties, and which in a very few localities is pure enough to be wrought for its lime: they contain, too, several quarries of the kind of soft building sandstone which I found the old stone-mason engaged in sawing at Hagley. But while the lower division of the New Red is thus unimportant, its upper division is, we find, not greatly inferior in economic value to the Coal Measures themselves. It forms the inexhaustible storehouse of our household salt,—all that we employ in our fisheries, in our meat-curing establishments for the army and navy, in our agriculture, in our soda manufactories,—all that fuses our glass and fertilizes our fields, imparts the detergent quality to our soap, and gives us salt herrings and salt pork, and everything else salt that is the better for being so, down to our dinner celery and our breakfast eggs; it forms, in short, to use a Scotchism, the great *salt-bucket* of the empire; and the hand, however frequently thrust into it, never finds an empty corner. By pursuing south-