

Sandstone, like patches of mineral bitumen floating in their clay-tinged pools, I called to mind the prophecy of Berkeley, and thought I could at length see, what Berkeley could not, the *scheme* of its fulfilment. The metaphysical bishop marked the *westward* course of empire: he saw Persia resigning the sceptre to Macedonia, and Macedonia yielding it, in turn, to Rome, and to those western nations of Europe that abut on the Atlantic. And at a time when North America was still covered with the primeval forests, he anticipated an age in which that country would occupy as preëminent a place among the nations as had been occupied in other ages by Assyria or Rome. Its enormous coal-fields — equal in extent, some of them, to all England, and whose dark seams, exposed to the light for miles, inlay the landscape as with ebony, and impart to it its most striking peculiarity of feature — seem destined to form no mean element in its greatness. If a patch containing but a few square miles has done so much for central England, what may not fields containing many hundred square leagues do for the United States?

“Westward the course of empire takes its way;  
The four first acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:  
Time’s noblest offspring is the last.”

And now, stripping off the dark Coal Measures like a pall, we expose the chocolate-colored beds of the Old Red Sandstone. In our immediate neighborhood there is a hiatus in the geologic series, — the Carboniferous system rests on the Silurian; but westwards, and on to the south-west, we may see the Old Red Sandstone stretching away in enormous development. As estimated by a practised eye, — that of Sir Roderick Murchison, — its entire thickness in this part of the country falls little short of ten thousand feet. Here, as everywhere else, it