

CHAPTER XIX.

Proofs of Design in the Dispositions of Strata of the Carboniferous Order.

IN reviewing the History and geological position of vegetables which have passed into the state of mineral coal, we have seen that our grand supplies of fossil fuel are derived almost exclusively from strata of the Transition series. Examples of Coal in any of the Secondary strata are few and insignificant; whilst the Lignites of the Tertiary formations, although they occasionally present small deposits of compact and useful fuel, exert no important influence on the economical condition of mankind.*

* Before we had acquired by experiment some extensive knowledge of the contents of each series of formations which the Geologist can readily identify, there was no *a priori* reason to expect the presence of coal in any one Series of strata rather than another. Indiscriminate experiments in search of coal, in strata of every formation, were therefore desirable and proper, in an age when even the name of Geology was unknown; but the continuance of such Experiments in districts which are now ascertained to be composed of the non-carboniferous strata of the Secondary and Tertiary Series, can no longer be justified, since the accumulated experience of many years has proved, that it is only in those strata of the Transition series which have been designated as the *Carboniferous Order*, that productive Coal mines on a large scale have ever been discovered.