

Book II. SUPERMEDIAL ORDER.

*Introduction.**

IT is the object of this division of our work, to comprise the several formations which intervene in descending, from those which have been described in the former book, to the coal measures.

This series of strata comprises several distinct groupes well marked from each other, and therefore entitled to the name of separate formations; but since many general relations and analogies pervade the whole,—since they are naturally linked together and appear to have been the successive products of the same order of causes, acting gradually indeed and accumulating deposits of various kinds in distinct periods, but yet without the intervention of any violent and abrupt change,—it has been judged expedient to include them all under one title in our more general classes, in order to avoid the needless multiplication of these greater divisions, the principal use of which consists in the assistance they afford to the memory of the student. To this class we have assigned the name Supermedial, from the position it occupies immediately above the Coal series, which forms the middle order in our arrangement. The formations which compose it, have been included by other authors under the term Secondary or Flœtz rocks; but since both these names have been made to comprise also the series of rocks constituting the coal districts, which (as forming a leading and strongly marked natural division, and belonging evidently to a very different order of things) clearly demand a separate classification, it became necessary to adopt a new and distinctive denomination. And it may be further observed, that of the old appellations, that of secondary is objectionable, because it stands properly distinguished from primitive rocks only, and never ought to have been retained after the Wernerian interpolation of the transition class; since, strictly speaking, the rocks of that class are themselves universally of secondary formation. The appellation flœtz, or horizontal, is still worse, because it conveys a descriptive idea which is only partially in accordance with the facts of the case, being founded on circumstances falsely assumed to be universal or even general;

* By the Rev. W. D. Conybeare.