

If, as seems probable, the coal fields of Yorkshire and Lancashire were once united, as those of Durham and Newcastle still are, the margins of the estuary in which they were formed are lost, except toward the mountains of Lancashire and Westmoreland. In like manner, no margin can be fixed for the estuary of the coal fields of Durham and Newcastle, except the Lammermuir range; and thus we are again conducted to the conclusion, that, unless those mountains be thought to have yielded all the sediments, great displacements of the crust of the globe have confused the ancient boundaries of the carboniferous sea, and reduced to mere conjecture the extent of the bordering land, and the circumstances of its drainage. This important though dark inquiry, will, however, again arrest our attention.

*Extent of British Coal Fields under superior Strata.—
Disturbances of the Carboniferous System.*

To what extent the relative level of land and sea was disturbed *during* the period which elapsed in the production of the carboniferous rocks cannot be known: to judge from the universal conformity of all the strata which compose it, and the rarity of coarse conglomerates (except at the base of the system), it might appear that no considerable displacement of the crust of the globe happened any where near the British Islands, during the whole carboniferous period. Yet the occurrence of a marine conchiferous bed among the estuary or freshwater strata of the Yorkshire coal field, seems absolutely to require the admission of considerable disturbing movements at a distance.

After, however, the deposition of this whole system, and before, at least, any considerable part of the next (red sandstone system), was laid upon it, the scene was totally changed, and the carboniferous rocks of the British islands broken and contorted by subterranean movements of an extensive and complicated description.