

oil. In such a position the oil must have suffered a slow distillation, and have found its way to the surface; or have so impregnated a portion of the earth, as to enable us to collect it from wells, as in various parts of Persia and India.* The author of an interesting paper in the American Journal of Science, states that petroleum is now daily discharging into the soft mud and gravel in the beds of the Muskingum and Hews's rivers. At Chilley, in the county of Sussex, beds of sand are permeated throughout with bituminous oil, originating either from neighbouring peat-bogs,† or from lignite beds of the wealden.

23. BITUMEN, AMBER, AND MELLITE.—Bitumen may be described as an inspissated mineral oil; it is generally of a dark-brown colour, with a strong odour of tar. In the Odin mine of Derbyshire, a species occurs which is elastic, being of the consistence of thick jelly, and bearing some resemblance to soft India-rubber; as it will remove the traces of a pencil, it has been named mineral caoutchouc. Some specimens possess the colour and transparency of amber: the soft bitumens may be rendered solid by heat.

From the bituminous substances which I have placed before you, we pass by an easy transition to *Amber*; for black amber bears, both in its appearance and composition, a close resemblance to

* Dr. Reichenbach.

† Fossils of the South Downs, p. 76.