

that of the Thames and the rivers that flow into the Wash and the Humber.

One of the best known rivers that enters the estuary of the Severn is the other Avon, which flows through Bath and Bristol. Its physical history, on a small scale almost precisely resembles that of the Rhine between Basle and Bonn.¹

West of Bristol there is a high plateau of Carboniferous Limestone, the flat top of which attains a height of nearly 400 feet above the level of the sea. Through a deep narrow gorge in this limestone (fig. 103) the river flows, between Clifton and Durdham Downs on the east and Leigh Wood on the west, north-west of which it enters the low grounds and finds its way to the estuary of the Severn at King's Road. Above Bristol, north and south of the river, the country consists of a number of isolated flat-topped hills, of which Dundry Hill and the Mendips form conspicuous members, while in the neighbourhood of Bath, Lansdown, Charney Down, Odd Down all the minor Oolitic plateaux now form portions of what was once a continuous broad tableland with minor undulations. In these regions the Avon takes its rise, swelled by many north-flowing tributaries, one of which, the Chew, rises on the north flank of the Mendip Hills. North of Bath, several minor streams flow into the Avon through beautiful valleys which have been scooped out of the Oolitic plateau, while the Boyd, the Siston, and the Frome pass through the soft undulating grounds of Lias, New Red Marl, and Coal-measures that lie west of the bold Oolitic escarpment between Bath and Wotton-under-edge. Some of these streams rise at

¹ 'On the Physical History of the Rhine,' 'Journ. Geol. Society,' 1874, A. C. Ramsay.