

of tons at the end of a hundred years the consumption would be 415,000,000 tons per annum, and the now estimated quantity of coal available for use would represent a consumption of 276 years.'¹ I offer no positive opinion on this subject, but I suspect the first view is likely to be nearer the truth than the last.

However this may be, it is certain that some day or other our coal must be practically exhausted, but so many things may happen ere that time that it is doubtful if even we, the trustees of the future, need to concern ourselves very much about the matter. Personal prudence, selfishness, or the love of money, will not be hindered by anxiety about people who are to live hundreds of years hence, and great part of England will still continue smoky as long as coal lasts in quantity, or at all events till the laws are enforced against the production of unnecessary smoke. All the centre of England is thick with it, floating from every coalfield, and from all the dependent manufacturing towns. The heaths and pastures of Derbyshire and Yorkshire between the two great coalfields are blackened by smoke, and even in the rainiest weather the sheep that ought to be white-wooled are dark and dingy. Every coalfield in England as it happens, is a centre of pollution to the air. But this does not affect the manufacturing population of these districts excepting in a sanitary, and therefore in a moral, point of view, and this state of affairs is too apt to be considered unavoidable in the present state of economics and unscientific practice, though it is not so of necessity.

What will be the state of Britain when all the coal is gone? The air at all events will be purified, and the

¹ 'Report of the Coal Commissioners,' pp. 16 and 17.