

mation, and to the softer strata of the old red sandstone underlying the mountain limestone, that a cursory observation of them would often lead to fallacious conclusions. It may however be generally recognised without much difficulty by the following distinctive characters; 1st, its containing gypsum; 2ndly, by the inferior consolidation of its stony beds; 3dly, by the regularity of its stratification, and the general parallelism of its beds to the horizon. (C.)

Further notices of the local characters of this formation will be incorporated in the account of its range and extent.

(b) *Mineral contents.* Besides the extensive deposit of rock salt and gypsum* noticed above, sulphate of strontian and ba-

* We have extracted the following notices from the notes obligingly given to the editor by Mr. Greenough with regard to the gypsum and salt.

Alabaster. Provincially Plaister stone, and Hall Plaister. In Devonshire, Spear, i. e. Spar.

This substance is a considerable article of trade. The larger masses are worked into pillars, as at Kedleston in Derbyshire, or vases and other ornaments. The finer varieties of the fibrous gypsum are made into earrings and necklaces: the coarser kinds are used as moulds by the potters of Staffordshire, or is used for stucco, plaister, flooring, &c. for which it is prepared by burning, and threshing, or pulverizing with flails, after which it is passed through a riddle.

In America the virtues of this substance as a manure are highly extolled, but in this country our expectations in this respect have been disappointed.

No organic remains or metallic minerals have hitherto been found in the gypsum of this formation.

At Newbiggin in Cumberland it lies in red argillaceous marle, between two strata of sandstone; the upper solid, hard and fine-grained, the under loose and coarse-grained: in some places it rests on decayed wood-like umber. (Hist. & Antiq. of Cumb.)

One mile south of Whitehaven in Cumberland, the subterranean workings for alabaster extend 30 yards in a direct line; the passages are low, and of a size just sufficient to allow one man to enter them. From the main passage are two or three lateral ones, each extending perhaps 10 yards; at their extremities are large spaces in which the alabaster is blasted by gunpowder.

The alabaster is generally compact, forming a regular and conformable bed, but on blasting it, crystals of selenite often appear in druses. After exposure, it often exhibits parallel lines, the effect of stratification, which are not perceptible in the fresh fracture.

At the commencement of the last war with France, from 200 to 300 tons of the Newbiggin gypsum was sold per annum. (Hutch. Hist. Cumb.)

It is remarkable that the names of many places near which salt is found terminate with wick or wych, as Droitwich, or Nantwich, &c.; and the houses in which salt is manufactured Wych-houses. Wick, according to Skinner, is an Anglo-Saxon word for district or habitation.

The *Aster trifolium*, or fawcwell to summer, a kind of Michaelmas daisy, is considered an indication that brine is in the neighbourhood: its proper habitat is the sea-shore.

The making of salt from the brine-springs adjacent to Nantwich in Cheshire, formed a very important business in the time of Elizabeth, when there were 216 salt works of six leads walling each; in 1774 there were