

BOOK III.*
MEDIAL OR CARBONIFEROUS ORDER.



CHAPTER I.

General view of the formations comprised in this order.

Section I. *Introductory notice.*

IT is intended to comprise, in the present book, an account of the rocks associated together in the districts which afford the principal deposit of fossil-coal, and indeed the only one capable of being applied to purposes of extensive utility which appears to exist in the whole geological series.

The class of rocks thus constituted will contain not only the great coal-deposit itself, but those of the limestone and sandstone also on which it reposes; which, though entitled to the character of distinct formations, are yet so intimately connected with the above, both geographically and geologically, that it is impossible to separate their consideration.

This series of rocks is by some geologists referred to the *flötz*, by others to the transition class of the Wernerians: we have preferred instituting a particular order for its reception, a proceeding justified by its proportional importance in the geological scale, its peculiar characters, and the many inconveniences arising from following either of the above conflicting examples. For this order we have proposed the name of *Medial*, wishing to adopt an appellation entirely free from theory, and indicating only the central place of this groupe in the five-fold division of the geological series which results from assigning to it a separate class. The epithet *carboniferous* is of obvious application to this series.

Had we been obliged to refer it either to the *flötz* or transition class of the Wernerians, we should not have hesitated in preferring the latter branch of the alternative; since at least ten characters will be found in common between the carboniferous and transition † class, for one which would lead to an opposite

* Chiefly by the Rev. W. D. Conybeare.

† We only use the term 'transition rocks' as indicating a part of the general series without any theoretical views.