

plains; and close to the last at Church Stretton, a still more important range of hills, of transition trap, slate, and quartz rock, which, under the names of *Caer Caradoc*, the *Wrekin*, &c. project many miles to the north-east, crossing the *Severn*, and extending almost to *Newport*. Thus the plain of *Shrewsbury* is bounded on the west, south, and east, by mountain chains of this age and class. The plain itself is generally over-spread by strata of the newer red sandstone; but many broken patches of coal-strata, almost too limited in extent to be worthy of mention, are scattered over it, and in the intervals between the transition chains by which it is indented. No distinct account of these has yet been made public. Next to these narrow and broken coal-fields of the plain of *Shrewsbury*, we find on the eastern side of the *Wrekin* chain, one of much greater importance, that, namely, of *Coalbrook Dale*.

#### (b) THE COALBROOK DALE COAL-FIELD.

This coal-field, like that of *Dudley*, reposes on transition limestone, a long belt of which skirts the transition chain of the *Wrekin*, on the eastern side, extending into *Herefordshire*: but sometimes between the limestone and the coal, a bed locally termed *die earth* (from the fact that beneath it the coal beds die, or cease) is interposed. This however in fact, is only a loose and impure form of the calcareous strata, adulterated by the mixture of particles of clay and sand. The nature of the fossils it contains clearly refers it to the same formation, which will be described in treating of the transition rocks. Trap rocks are also interposed in some places between the lime and coal; an account of which will be found under the proper head.

The coal-measures rise west-north-west at an angle of about 6°. On the eastern side, towards which they dip, they are succeeded by the strata of the great red sandstone tract, now generally referred to the newer sandstone; it has not however been absolutely ascertained whether they are prolonged beneath this sandstone, or cut off abruptly against it: the former opinion however is entertained by many of the most experienced miners. And as at the distance of 12 miles to the <sup>east</sup>~~west~~, the coal-strata of the *Dudley* coal-field appear to emerge from beneath the same formation with an opposite inclination, they have been supposed to have a subterraneous connexion. However this may be, it does not seem possible for any one who has attentively studied the two sandstone and coal-formations in their character and relations, as exhibited in the clearest manner in the south-western counties, to entertain a doubt as to the class