

the chain, and disposed nearly at equal distances through its length. The cavern of Wokey hole,* and the defile of Cheddar cliffs, with its long line of stupendous mural precipices, certainly among the most magnificent objects of this kind in Britain, are the well-known features of this chain.

The western calcareous boundary of this coal-field is not formed by a single continuous ridge, but by a series of successive elevations emerging from the plain of the more recent horizontal strata. Of these, the first in proceeding from the south (where the Mendip chain ends) to the north, is Broadfield down, a calcareous mass about three miles long; its strata dip every way from the centre; it presents the precipitous defiles of Cleve and Brockley Combes; which, though greatly inferior in magnificence to Cheddar, yet derive from their luxuriant woods a contrasted character of beauty which is there absent. Broadfield down approaches within two miles of the Mendips; it is succeeded on the north, after an interval of half a mile only in the narrowest part, by Leigh down; but as the calcareous chains rapidly recede from each other, the interval quickly increases, and in the depression between these chains lies the little basin of the Nailsea coal-field.

Leigh Down extends in a north-east direction to the river Avon below Bristol, and is prolonged on the opposite side of that river (which here flows through that narrow and precipitous gorge, well known by the name of St. Vincent's rocks) by Durdham down to Westbury. The gorge of the river, lined as it is by an almost uninterrupted succession of mural precipices, affords an unrivalled opportunity of studying the various beds of this formation, which are here elevated in an angle of 45° to the north. More than 200 of these beds are enumerated in the 5th volume of the Geological Transactions by Mr. Cumberland.

This calcareous series rests on conformable beds of old red sandstone, which may be seen on both sides the river near Cook's folly, extending on the south under Leigh down and Weston down, a calcareous hill skirting the channel below Portishead point, and apparently thrown forward beyond the general line of Leigh down by an enormous fault. On the north of the river this old red sandstone extends towards Westbury, but is much covered up and concealed by the more recent horizontal deposits of the newer sandstone and magnesian conglomerates, resting on the truncated edges of its inclined strata, as is also the case at Portishead point above-mentioned. From

* This cavern, however, is not situated in the carboniferous limestone, but in the calcareo-magnesian conglomerates, here abutting against the chain.