

going south along the Oolites, the Stonesfield Slate rapidly thins away, or changes its lithological character, for it is quite unknown at the base of the Great Oolite towards Wotton-under-Edge and Bath. In the opposite direction going northward, the Stonesfield Slate passes into the Northampton Sand, where we will leave it for the present.

The Great Oolite was originally so called by William Smith in 1812, and the Upper Oolite in 1815, to distinguish it from the Lower or Inferior Oolite, which lies below the Fuller's Earth, whereas the former lies above it. It is often named the Bath Oolite, and the greatest development of that excellent building-stone is near the city, which is almost entirely built of 'Bath stone.' It first makes its appearance on the south near Norton St. Philip, about six miles south of Bath, from whence, overlaid by Forest Marble, it ranges northerly, forming the flat-topped scarped hills on either side of the Avon near Bath, and so on by Wotton-under-edge to Minchin-Hampton. Beyond this it forms a large part of the table land, intersected by valleys, that lie between Minchin-Hampton in Gloucestershire and Towcester in Northamptonshire. In Northamptonshire its lowest sandy beds are the equivalents of the Stonesfield Slate. To this part of the subject I shall return in describing important physical changes that take place further north.

The best beds of the Great Oolite are of cream-coloured limestone, so soft when first extracted from the quarry, that it can be easily sawed into blocks, but hardening on exposure. Some of its fossils are also found in the Fuller's Earth and the Inferior Oolite, and a few are first known in the Lias, and, indeed, throughout the whole there is a general agreement in the