

In my report as a member of the Coal Commission (1871), I have shown that under Permian and New Red strata, north of the Bristol coalfield, there may probably be about 55,000 millions of tons of coals available, at all events under 4,000 feet in depth, and to this Mr. Prestwich has added 400 millions of tons for the Severn Valley on the south side of the estuary.

The busy population that now covers the coalfields, and to which so many railways converge, may therefore some day spread over adjoining agricultural areas, and render them as wealthy, smoky, and repulsive to the outward eye as many visible coalfields now are. Between the mouth of the Firth of Clyde and the mouth of the Firth of Forth the whole country is one great coalfield, and this is the part of Scotland where the population is thickest. Bordering Wales and the mountains of Lancashire and Derbyshire, on the east and west, are three great coalfields, and these districts also contain dense populations. Further north lies the great Newcastle coalfield, where, again, the population is proportionately redundant. All the central part of England, which is dotted over with coalfields, teems in like manner with inhabitants. The South Wales coalfield, which is the largest of all, however, does not, except in places such as Swansea, Llanelly, Dowlais, Merthyr Tydvil, and other centres, show everywhere the same concentration of population. A great part of this area has till lately not been opened up by railways, and the coal has been heretofore not worked to the same extent as in the coalfields of the middle and northern parts of England, which have been extensively mined for a longer period.

Some years ago, after the publication of Mr. Hull's 'Coalfields of Great Britain,' Professor Jevons, in a