

hideous heaps of slag, so suggestive of wealth, power, culture, and prosperity, that disfigure South and North Staffordshire, and all the other iron-making districts, will in time crumble into soil, and, covered by grass and trees, they will one day become beautiful features in the landscape; for man cannot permanently disfigure nature. Even when this thing takes place will there be any necessity for the country being reduced to absolute poverty? Our mountain lands, like the Schwarzwald, may be more woody than at present, and yield supplies of fuel, the plains and tablelands more richly cultivated, and who knows besides what motive powers may by that time be economised other than those that result from the direct application of artificial heat? Holland and the lowlands of Switzerland without coal are two of the happiest and most prosperous countries in Europe, and it appears as if Italy would follow in their steps, but on a larger scale. In the far future, Britain may still be prosperous, powerful, and happy, even though all its coal be exhausted.

Of late years a great deal of valuable iron ore has been obtained from the top of the Lower Lias and from the Marlstone of Yorkshire, and this tends still more rapidly to exhaust our coal. The result has been the rapid growth of the enterprising district and port of Middlesborough on the Tees. At night the whole country is aglow with iron furnaces, and the time may arrive when the beautiful Oolitic valleys of North Yorkshire will become a black country as smoky as the Lancashire and Staffordshire coalfields.

The Northampton Sands of the Oolites also yield large quantities of silicious ironstone. It must not, however, be supposed that ironstone is everywhere plentiful in that formation, nor yet in the Marlstone,