

SEC. VI.—On the occurrence of Coal in Frederick county.

Having received information that some indications of coal had been discovered in Fredericktown valley, and that a company had been organized to proceed to its further development, I conceived it to be my duty, before closing my operations for the past season, to make an excursion into that part of the county where those indications were reported to have been observed; with a view of verifying them if possible, so as to be enabled to encourage those interested in the immediate prosecution of their work in their completion, or, under other circumstances, to guard them against any fallacious expectations. The region of country in which the supposed coal formation would occur, comprises an inferior ridge of hills, at the foot of the Catoctin Mountains, known by the name of the Red Hills, which, about the headwaters of the Lower Tuscarora, spurs in a S. E. direction, forming what has more recently been termed the Chapel ridge. This ridge is composed mainly of the breccious limestone, associated with a shaly red sandstone, amongst which are occasionally seen detached blocks of Trapp rocks. The region extends to the Point of Rocks, where the mineral mass is a compact talcose rock of green colour, and is undoubtedly a primary rock. In the minor hills adjoining, a talcose slate has been cut through by the excavations made for the Rail Road.

I confess that I have seen nothing in this direction which favours the opinion, entertained by some, that it embraces an independent coal formation. The supposed indications that were pointed out to me, are not in reality such, being merely the outbreakings of a lead colored talcose slate; and a specimen of coal, which was exhibited to me, was unquestionably derived from another quarter.

At a place called the Yellow Spring, six miles from Fredericktown, between the Little and Big Tuscarora, there is a remarkable formation presenting strong indications of coal. The associated rocks are, a bituminous shale with impressions and remains of plants that are carbonized, and embracing seams of anthracite; a sandstone enveloping spangles of mica and containing carbonate of lime; a compact limestone slightly bituminous, and a calcareous breccia (Breccia of the Capitol.) Under existing circumstances the precise arrangement of the rocks cannot be determined. The carboniferous shale occasionally appears at the surface, and is at other times enveloped by the calciferous and micaceous sandstone. Ledges of breccious limestone are also seen cropping out, on the more elevated spots of the formation, and, within it, is embraced a band of blue bituminous limestone. The general inclination of the rock is at an angle of about 45° , with a dip to the N. The direction of the formation is N. E. and S. W. and its characteristic features have been traced over an extent of only three miles with an average breadth of one mile. De-