

erage thickness of workable mercantile coal is about eleven feet. Neither the exact size of this coal field, nor the extent of any of its seams can be determined unless by a trigonometrical survey. The estimates made here are only approximations derived from detached surveys of different tracts of different owners. The most reliable estimates agree in giving the number of acres of the Big Vein at about 20,000.

The coal from this coal field alone is sufficient to supply the whole Union for centuries, and practically may be said to be inexhaustible.

*Quality of the Coal.*—For a long time the superior excellence of this coal was questioned by rival interests, but prolonged experience with numerous scientific and practical tests have established its character as superior to any other accessible in this country *for the generation of steam, either for navigation or manufacturing purposes, for the reduction of iron ores and for ordinary domestic uses.* This has been so thoroughly conceded that any proof to support it is unnecessary. It is the common judgment of the country, alike confirmed by laboratory tests and the practical trial of ocean steamship lines traversing the great Atlantic.

MIDDLE COAL FIELD OF ALLEGHANY.

Between Negro and Meadow Mountains there is the Middle coal field of Alleghany. This coal approaches nearest in its composition to the Pittsburg coal. It has not yet been used except for domestic purposes in the neighborhood. It is a fine compact coal, and is only prevented from more general use by want of means of transportation.

*Western Coal Field of Alleghany County.*—This lies in the Valley of Youghioghney river, and will become a matter of great interest, not so much for supplying foreign demand, as for the manufacture of the iron ores, which are associated with it here in *large quantities.* This coal is much of the same quality as the coal in the Middle field.

- The coal veins in this region are :
- A two foot vein.
  - A four foot vein.
  - A four foot vein.
  - A six foot vein, and
  - A five foot vein.

—All these coal fields, from the peculiar formation of the country being intersected by ravines, present great facilities for being worked. Many of them drain themselves, and can be ventilated at a trifling expense. In the value of coal lands