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## ON LEAD SMELTING IN ENGLAND IN THE 17TH CENTURY.

Joseph Glanvil, on the Mendip Mines.

Philosophical Transactions 1668, Vol.3, p.770.

There is Sparr and Caulk (sulphate of baryta, usually spelt cauk) about the Ore; and another substance, which they call the Crootes, which is a nearly white stone, marked with Ore, and soft. The Sparr is white, transparent, and brittle like Glass. The Caulk, white and heavy, heavier than any stone. The Vein lies between the Crootes, and is of different breadths. It breaks off sometimes abruptly in an Earth, they call a Deading Bed, and after a fathom or two may come again, keeping the same point. It terminates sometimes in a dead Earth Clayie, without Croot or Sparr; sometimes in a Rock called a Fore-stone.

There is much difference in the goodnes of the Ore. The clearest and heaviest, best. 36 hundred of Ore may yield a Tun of Lead. Some small eyes of other mixtures, Brass, etc.

They beat the Ore with an Iron flat piece; cleanse it in Water from the dirt; sift it through a Wire-sive. The Ore tends to the bottom, and the Refuse lies at the top. And these are the Preparations, they make use of, before 'tis fit for fusion. Then they have a Hearth about 5 foot high, set upon Timber, to be turn'd as a wind-mill, to avoid the inconvenience of smoak upon a shifting Wind. The Hearth contains half a bushel of Ore and Coal, with bellowes on the top, The Charcoal is put upon the Hearth, where the Ore is; laying dry Gads upon the top, which they call their White coales. There is a sink upon the side of the Hearth, into which the Lead runs, that holds about an hundred and an half. Then it is cast into Sand, and runs into those Sowes (as they call them) which they sell. They have a barr, to stir the Fire; a Shovel, to throw it up; and a Ladle heated red-hot, to cast out the Mattal.

Once melting is enough. The good melts best, and the best first. There is sometimes half odds in the goodness. The best is distinguished by its weight.

There is a flight in the smoak, which falling upon the Grass, poysons those Cattel that eat of it. They find the taste of it upon their lips to be sweet, when the smoak chances to fly in their Faces. Brought home, and laid in their houses, it kills Rats and Mice. If this flight mix with Water, in which the Oar is wash't, and be carried away into a streams, it hath poisoned such Cattel, as have drunk of it after a current of 3 Miles. What of this flight falls upon the sane, they gather up to melt in a Slagghearth, and make Shot and Sheet-lead of it.

They sometimes find Slaggs, 3,4 or 5 foot under ground, but such as they judge cast aside heretofore.