

All Rights Reserved.

### MIDDLETON-IN-TEESDALE.

By F. E. COATES.

#### Lead Mines.

The Romans certainly obtained lead ore from this district and on the high ground on both sides of the Tees some of the old smelting pits with heaps of slag beside them could be discerned amidst the heather.

The abundance of wood was of great service to the miner, and as the supply ran out the ore was carted lower down, anywhere where wood was available. Near Barnard Castle, at Penny Hill, a large accumulation of slag was noted 100 years ago. This attracted the attention of workmen employed at Mark Sherlock's mines, and they, after assaying part of the slag, obtained leave to try their skill on the heap, which was carted down to the Gaunless smelt mill, about a mile distant, where, after being put through the usual series of operations, yielded more than 300 cwts. of lead. Whilst this slag was being removed, evidence was found that not only lead ore had been smelted on the spot, but sheet lead had also been made; a small pit had been sunk and covered with sand, into which the lead ore had been run, on the rising ground west of what was Amos's farm in Marwood. There were many of these antique smelting pits and large quantities of slag.

In 1468 Edward IV. granted all mines of gold and silver and all mines of lead holding gold and silver north of the Trent to Richard, Earl of Warwick (Lord of the Barnard Castle Manor), John, Earl of Northumberland, and others, for forty years.

In 1475 the same King gave the mines of Alston moor to Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Henry, Earl of Northumberland, and others.

In 1478 King Edward granted (on the surrender of the former claim) all mines of gold, silver, copper and lead in Northumberland, Durham and Westmorland to William Goderswick and Dodereswick Varerswick (two immigrants from Flanders), who, it appears, introduced new methods of working the mines, extracting the metal from the ore by a surer process, and thus obtaining for themselves a good profit in addition to paying a heavy royalty to the King.

In the days of Queen Elizabeth an association was formed entitled the Society for the Mines Royal, on whom was bestowed a grant of gold, silver and copper within all the mining counties, with liberty to assign parts and portions.

September, 1571. Robert Bowes and Charles Chaytor held an inquisition at Flakebrigge in the Manor of Egglestone, surveyed and valued the Flakebrigge mine, formerly the property of Charles, Earl of Westmorland, attainted of high treason. "The premises were much wrought in the time of the said Earl and that presently they are in great ruin and decay."

The mine was leased to Ralph Bowes for 21 years at the yearly rent of 60s. Robert Bowes, knight, and Geo. Bowes, Esq., had been lessees of a lead mine within the New Forest, Teesdale, under King Edward VI., their lease being dated Feb. 4, 1550.

Early in the 16th century, owing to the increasing scarcity of wood, lead mining in Teesdale was to a great extent abandoned.

Wood was used as fuel throughout the country, and it was difficult to accustom the people to the use of coal. At one period an Act of Parliament was passed prohibiting the use of coal in London.

The London Lead Mining Company was established in Teesdale nearly 270 years ago. The conditions were very serious, for the industrial progress of the people had been stopped and there had been two visitations of the Plague. Experiments were made and it was found practicable to smelt lead ore with coal fuel. An association was formed as the Lead Mining Co. for smelting down lead ore with pit coal and sea coal.

With the resuscitation of mining came improvements in agriculture and improvements in the lot of the people, the neighbouring owners, stimulated by the experiments of the Lead Company, proceeded to develop their estates and explore the further field.

The work was difficult to get going and to teach the miners new methods. One great drawback was the rudimentary style of washing the ore as procured from the mines. The Teesdale ores procured by the Company in the earlier efforts was carried to the Whitfield and Acton smelt mills in Northumberland, a distance of nearly 30 miles across the trackless wastes.

Nearly 170 years ago, Henry, first Earl of Darlington, erected the first smelting furnace in Teesdale at Langdon Beck.

The Lead Company, represented by Mr Robt. Stagg, first practised the art of refining by means of what was termed the Devonshire furnace, at the smelt mill they built at Egglestone, some of the earliest workmen being natives of France. Thence the same system of refining was extended to Whitfield Mill.

After a hundred years the Lead Company made fair progress, then Mr. Robert Stagg was appointed their superintendent, and Joshua Stagg also held office, and Mr Dodd, the manager at Nent Head, had the letting of the bargains to the workmen. The mines at Flakebrigge, Rockett Gill, Parkin Groove and Wire Gill were amongst their earliest attempts.

The secret of the success of the Lead Company was perseverance, and thus they profited where others had failed, such as at the Manor Gill mine, which had been commenced by a family named Walton. After trying for a considerable time with only a limited return, they at last resigned their rights to the Company, having had enough of the speculation. A few days after they had concluded terms with the Company, they cut a vein of great value, which if it had been their luck to alight upon it for themselves they would have secured for themselves a respectable competence.

#### Lodge Syke Success.

Some years afterwards the Company obtained a lease of the ground in which the Lodge Syke Mine was situated. This had been previously tried out by local speculators to their loss.

The partnership in the bargain was let by Mr Dodd to six miners—Richard Lee, George Watson, John Bussey, Isaac Raine, Richard Raine, and John Raine. They were each to receive £8 per fother for all the lead raised during the period of two years from the date of letting the bargain, and in the meantime to have each thirty shillings per month advanced to their account.

They worked for a year, but no result, and then Mr Dodd wished to put an end to the trial, as he did not feel justified in expending further the funds entrusted to him. The workmen, however, had not lost heart, and they still were confident that they should find lead, and they entreated that they might be allowed to continue. To their help came Mr Joshua Stagg, who said that he would take the risk himself, and promised the miners that he would supply the provisions himself.

The men laboured with redoubled energy till success ultimately crowned their efforts, and one of the richest mines in Teesdale was thus opened out.

In six weeks the miners procured the astonishing quantity of 1,212 bings of ore, and in one year from this mine 16,000 bings were sent to the smelt mill.

The Company, after receiving a liberal amount of interest for their money, investing the surplus, and thus enabled them to prosecute their after researches to a successful issue.

#### The Sharnberry Mine.

The Sharnberry Mine, in the parish of Egglestone, was some time afterwards added to the fortunate workings of the Company, though for a long space of forty years it had been unproductive. A new generation of miners had grown up to follow those who had first broken ground at this spot before the vein was cut. At last, unexpectedly, the mineral treasure was revealed, and with grateful hearts a deputation carried a specimen of the ore to Mr Stagg, but the Company had spent no less than £30,000 before success was assured.

The mining was more difficult than the lucky Yukon prospectors ever had to deal with, for many men took in a partnership and worked regularly for a fortnight, every day bringing fresh evidence of their approach to the vein, and first, when they thought that the vein was discovered, a hollow sound followed the blow of the pick and the next moment they struck right into the "old man." The mine had long before been explored from some point of which they had no knowledge, and their toil had been in vain.

A few years after the opening of the Lodge Syke Mine, Mr Robert Stagg and Mr Robert Dodd, both retired from active life, and Mr Robert Stagg, jun., was appointed.

He effected many improvements in the habits and lot of the miners. He repressed the quarterly custom of advancing each man ten shillings. This sum was generally spent at the public house, where each partnership had an open account, and stopped the abuse of letting bargains to men who got others to work for them at lower wages. These, and the stoppage of long credits, were replaced by a new system of subsist money to £2 per month. About 1820 he founded a school, and in the good building of the Company's school further efforts were directed towards the benefit of the rising generation.

In 1821, an experienced resident medical practitioner was appointed to attend upon the workmen and their families, and relieved them of a burden which in some cases was almost insupportable.

At the same time the Company commenced erecting cottages for their workmen, then known as New Town, or more properly, Masterman Place, so called as a mark of respect to the then Governor of the Company.

Mr Stagg, during his thirty years, managed to raise the standard of living very much.

In 1821, the Skears mine was commenced about a mile from Middleton. This mine was not so good as Lodge Syke, yet amply repaid the capital sunk in it.

The Little Egglestone Mine, in the estate of Duke of Cleveland, was opened by a Company in 1848, and at first was very productive, reaching 1,000 bings in one year.

Sharnberry Mine, in the Egglestone manor, first did well, and then the bulk of the ore was passed through an extension of the workings within the boundary of the Ecclesiastical Commission.

Coldberry Mine was bought by the Messrs H. (a local association), before the Company took over, and fine samples of lead and silver were obtained. Coldberry had its "ups" and "downs" and an entire abandonment was at one time contemplated, but even after a century of working, it was to be looked upon as the leading mine in the Company's hands. Its approximate yield was about 5,000 bings.

The mines, for the most part, were in low spots amidst the hills, and Jagger galloways were employed in bringing the ore from the mine to the smelting mills.

The Skears Mine was pleasantly situated. About 1758 a number of miners left the High Peak, Derbyshire to work the Langdon Beck mine, which they had taken a lease.

Thirteen families came, but only a few stayed. The Barkers, Drabbles, Redferns, Smedley, Staleys, Rawbottoms, and Wagstaffes remained.

The captain of the company was Mr Joshua Stagg. His tombstone is in Middleton Churchyard.

Mr Stagg retired to Dishforth and died in 1821 and was succeeded on his retirement by his son-in-law, Mr R. W. Bainbridge, which post he held a long time, being in turn relieved of his work by his son, H. K. Bainbridge, and died in 1870.

Mr Bainbridge resided at Middleton House, and he gathered around him a staff of intelligent labourers, and there was not a benevolent or philanthropic institution in Teesdale without his assistance.

A fother was a weight of lead containing eight pigs, and every pig twenty-one stones and a half. With the plumbers in London it was 19½ cwts., and at the mines it was 22½ cwts., but it always took some skill to check a plumber's account.

The first building covered with lead that I am aware of was the Leaden Hall Market, London. The manor house at Leaden Hall, which gave the name to the market, belonged in 1309 to Sir Hugh Newell. It was a large building used for weighing wool, and other wares, and partly for the painters working for the decking of pageants. It was also an interesting occupation 50 years ago watching the men dressing the lead over rolls and corners of a roof, for it was a material that could not be firmly tacked down owing to its expansion and contraction, and it was a skilled occupation making a lead flat roof.

#### Lead Mining Slavery.

The Black Death freed the agricultural workers from serfdom, and it was the Dissolution of Monasteries and three recurrences of the plague that freed the miners partly from bondage, and had their miner monks—Durham, Beverley, Mount Grace.

Neither Bishop Ruthall nor Wolsey were men to fight infringements of liberties by the Tudors. Statesmen, the advantage lay in forwarding a policy of centralisation as against a local Durham policy, and they played for higher game than feudal rights. The palatinate has relics of feudalism. The most alive and least able to defend itself was betrayed in the house of friends, and after the plague very few men were left to work the mines.

The state of serfdom persisted in all the countries of Europe until quite recent times.

The salters and colliers in Scotland continued to be so treated as slaves until emancipated by an Act of Parliament of 1775, the terms of which were proved so inadequate that a Supplementary Act was found necessary in 1799.

The Quakers were prominent in the call for the abolition of slavery, and they did practical work in Teesdale, where they became interested in the conditions of the people, with the result that the London Lead Company was instituted and better conditions enticed men into the industry, but still the life was hard.

The mine shops were mere sheds, and the upper floor contained bunks lined with straw for beddings where the miners spent five days a week during eight hour shifts. A king was chosen for each shift of 30 or 40 men, and they held a regular court and enforced order and discipline.

After leaving schools established by the Company, children were sent to "wash" at the mines. After a while they became pick men—as high as they could aspire.

The miners worked at most five days a week, and to eke out a living worked at quarries in their spare time. Some kept a cow or two, a few sheep, and a garden for the produce to add to their earnings.

The dalesmen were religiously inclined, and the great bulk were Dissenters, the Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyans being by far the largest bodies in the dale.

(To be continued.)

### HINTS AND RECIPES

Vinegar added to the water in which fish will make the fish firm and give it a better flavour.

It is impossible to keep the sink from getting greasy at times. When this is the case it with a cloth dipped in paraffin oil scrub it well with hot soda water, and finally rinse the sink down with cold water.

When sugaring doughnuts, put in a little sugar, and shake well. This is the best way and the doughnuts are sweeter.

If you are making a mayonnaise, add a few drops of lemon-juice to curdle, a few drops of vinegar usually put it right.

Meat, or fruit puddings with a sauce will be cooked sooner if you cut out a piece from the bottom, before putting into the pudding.

A small portion of ground almonds mixed with a cake will prevent the frosting to the bottom.

Braises may be easily stoned if water is poured on them, and they are left for a short time.

Tiled hearths should never be greased, as this causes the enamel and glaze to crack. The tiles with a cloth dipped in oil until they are clean, then polish with dry cloth.

If you suffer from high blood pressure, eat plenty of raw green foods, such as apples, and eat small portions only of baked meats, with no gravy.

If a junket does not set when cream has been added because the milk was not fresh, place the dish into a bowl of water, and it will become firm in a short time.

Discoloured glass bottles and jars may easily be cleaned with a mixture of soda ash and salt. The articles so treated should be left to soak for a day or so, and then rinsed in warm water.

If your household linen has become yellowish, it may be greatly brightened by placing a little turpentine in the water in which it is boiled.

When the bristles of a nail brush become dogged with use and soap, they may be revived by steeping the brush in a solution of salt and water. Add a tablespoonful of salt to a quart of water.

TO MAKE SOAP JELLY. Sift some yellow soap, according to amount wanted, cover it with water, bring slowly to the boil. Omit the water and use up in this way. When the soap has dissolved, leave it to cool, and you will have a jelly, a little of which will make a good lather.

SOAP SHAMPOO. Cut a cake of pure white soap into small pieces, put in a jar with a well, and add about a quarter of a pint of water, put on the lid, and shake until a lather is formed. Let it stand for an occasional shake. A cake of soap diluted with water will last several months.

COOKING GREEN VEGETABLES. Green vegetables are often spoiled by salt and Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, and minces, and no more should be put into absolutely hot water, but cover them, the cabbage should be cut into quarters. The water should be brought to the boil, and the vegetables put in, and boiled fast for 10 minutes, they should be perfectly cooked.

CREAM FOR GOOD BAKING. Creams of tartar and bicarbonate of soda in these respects, that in the former takes place whilst in the latter is acted upon immediately. They are an excellent mixture for baking purposes. Cream of tartar exercises a retarding effect on the mixture it is used with, and contact with heat. Salt has a retarding effect on fermentation.

APPLE PUDDINGS OF VARIOUS KINDS. Apple Pudding.—Slice enough apples to fill a pie dish with a little sugar, sprinkle over them two tablespoonsful of sugar, add two tablespoonsful of flour, and a few cloves or a nutmeg for flavouring. Put it in a buttered tin, and bake in a moderate oven for fifteen minutes to cool. Then cover with soft brown sugar, 2ozs. butter beaten to cream, stir in 4ozs. flour and one egg, mix with a little milk alternately, mixing thoroughly until the mixture is soft and creamy. Bake in a moderate oven for about forty minutes.

Apple Betty.—Butter a deep tin with a layer of breadcrumbs, and a layer of butter. Then cover with a layer of sliced apples, and a layer of breadcrumbs. Pour a tablespoonful of water over the apples, and a little water over the breadcrumbs. This pudding is baked with cream or custard.

Apple Meringue Pudding.—Put a few apples, two eggs, two