

well convinced that none of our iron ores in grain were tractable by the loadstone, and well persuaded that all iron ores, which are magnetical, have acquired that property only by the action of fire: that the mines of the north, which are so magnetical as to be sought after by the compass, must owe their origin to fire, and are formed by the means, or the intermedium of water; from which I was induced to suppose that this ferruginous and magnetic sand, that I found in a small quantity in my iron mines, must owe its origin to fire, and having examined the place I was confirmed in this idea. This magnetical sand is found in a wood, where, from time immemorial, they have made, and still continue to make, coal furnaces. It is likewise more than probable that there were formerly considerable fires here. Coal and burnt wood produce iron dross, which includes the most fixed parts of iron that vegetables contain; it is this fixed iron which forms the sand here spoken of, when the dross is decomposed by the action of the air, sun, and rain, for then these pure iron particles, which are not subject to rust, nor to any other kind of alteration, suffer themselves to be carried away by the water, and penetrate with it some feet deep into the earth. What I here
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