

and far less in the Lower Lias. I have seen prospectuses of mining companies in the middle of England, in which it was stated that all the ironstone bands of Middlesborough are present in ground where scarce an ounce of them exists.

In older times, in the Weald of the south of England, a considerable amount of iron ore used to be mined and smelted with wood or charcoal, before the Coal-measures were worked extensively, and when the Weald was covered to a great extent with forest. Then the chief part of our iron manufactures was carried on in the south-east of England. Indeed, late in the last century, there were still iron furnaces in the Weald of Kent and Sussex. The last furnace is said to have been at Ashburnham; and here and there we may even now see heaps of slags overgrown with grass, and the old dams that supplied the water which drove the water-wheels that worked the forges of Kent and Sussex. It is said that cannon used in the fight with the Spanish Armada came from this district; and the rails round St. Paul's and other churches of the time of Sir Christopher Wren were forged from the Wealden iron.

I have already remarked that a large part of the wealth which we owe to our Carboniferous minerals, arises, not so much from the commercial value of the coal and ironstone of the coalfields, as from the fact that they form the means of working many different branches of industry. To the vast power which steam has given us, very much of our extraordinary prosperity as a nation is due. Yet were it not for our coal-beds, the agency of steam would be almost wholly denied to us. And hence it is that our great manufacturing districts have sprung up either in, or in