

The salt-works at Droitwich were visited, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, by Leland the antiquary. He "asked a salter," he tells us, "how many furnaces they had in all; and the salter numbered them to an eighteen score, saying, that every one paid yearly to the king six shillings and eightpence." "Making salt," the antiquary adds, "is a notable destruction of wood, — six thousand loads of the young pole-wood, easily cloven, being used twelvemonthly; and the lack of wood is now perceivable in all places near the Wyche, on as far as Worcester." The Dudley coal-field seems to have been broached just in time to preserve to the midland districts their iron and salt trade. The complaint that the old forests were well-nigh gone was becoming general, when, in 1662, a Dudley miner took out a patent for smelting his ironstone with coke instead of charcoal; and the iron trade of England has been

the largest of which, there called Grusnoe Azore, is probably the same that is distinguished in our maps by the name of the new salt lake, and is five miles long, and two-thirds of a mile wide. These lakes have the property, in common with others of the same kind, that during the hottest season of the year, which, in these parts, is from May to the end of August, the surface of the water becomes covered with a crust of salt nearly an inch thick, which is collected with shovels into boats, and piled away. This is managed by private individuals, who rent the privilege from the government of the Don, on condition of paying a tenth of the produce. On this occasion I was much interested in being able to prove to my own satisfaction, that in such lakes it is nothing more than the rapid evaporation from the heat of the sun, and the consequent supersaturation of the water with salt, that effects the crystallization of the latter; for these lakes are so shallow that the little boats in which the salt is gathered are generally trailing on the bottom, and leave a long furrow behind them on it; so that the lake is consequently to be regarded as a wide pan of enormous superficial extent, in which the brine can easily reach the degree of concentration required; while, on the other hand, if the summer prove cold or rainy, the superfluous water must necessarily militate against the crystallization of the salt, or even prevent it altogether."