A Relation
Concerning the Quick-silver Mines in Friuli; communicated by
Dr. Edward Brown, co firming as well the Account formerly given of that subject, in Numb. 2. of these Transacti-
ous, as enlarging the same with some Additions.

The Town of Idria, in the County of Goritia and Province of
Friuli, is seated low, and encompass'd with Hills on all
sides. A River of the same name runs by it, which although
Leandro terms it superbisimo flumine d'Idria, yet I found small
and shallow at the time when I was there; though upon plenti-
ful Rain it proves sufficient to convey down the Firr-Trees
and other Wood required in the building of the Mines, and also
for Fuel required in the service of them: And to this end there
is an handsome work of Piles made floating athwart the River
(after the same manner as I observ'd in New-fol in upper Hun-
gary crosses the River Gran,) to stop the Trees, which are cut
down, and cast into the River above this place.

What is chiefly considerable in this Town, are the Quick-
silver-Mines, very well known to the Neighbouring parts, and
exceeding useful to many at greater distance,

The entrance into these Mines is not high, or upon an Hill, as
in many other Mines; but in the Town itself, whereby they are
somewhat the more troubled with Water, against which they are
provided with many excellent Engins and Devices, as at other
depth Mines. The deepest part of the Mine from the entrance is
between 120 and 130 fathoms.

Of the Quick-silver of this Mine they make two sorts: The
one they call Jungfraw, that is, Virgin-Quick-silver, the other,
plain Quick-silver. Virgin-Mercury they call that, which disco-
vers itself without the help of Fire, and is either plainly to be
seen in the Ore, or falls down in little drops in the Mine, and
sometimes streams out in good quantity; as about seven years
agoe it ran out of the Earth at first in a stream as small as a
thred, and afterwards, as big as a pack-thread, but ceas'd in three
or our days.

That also is accounted Virgin-Quick-silver, which, having no
need
need to pass the fire, is separated by water first in a Sive, and afterwards in a long trough, having very small holes at one end. So that there are in a manner two sorts of Virgin-Mercury; the one, running out and discovering itself without labour; the other, requiring some way of Extraction and separation, though not so high an one, as by Fire.

Plaine Quick silver they name that, which is not at first perceived by the Eye, or falls from the Ore, but is forc'd out by Fire. And this they obtaine out of the Ore, or out of the Cinnabar of Mercury, which they digg out of this Mine. The Ore of this Mine is of a dark colour, mix'd with red. But the best is an hard stone; which they commit not presently to the operation of the Fire, but powder it grossly, and work it by the Sives; so, if any Virgin-quick silver be found in it, it may be separated in this manner, and what doth not pass the Sive, may be separated by Fire in Iron-furnaces; Fifty of them in a Fire.

The Quick silver ore of this Mine is the richest of all Ores, I have yet seen; for ordinarily it contains in it halfe Quick silver, and in two parts of Ore one part of Quick silver, and sometimes in 3 parts of Ore, two parts of Quick silver.

I went into the Mine by the Pitt of St. Agatha, and came up again by that of St. Barbara, descending and ascending by Ladders. I ascended at one of 639 fathoms or 89 fathoms, Andreas Siferus, in Kircher's Mund Subterraneus, makes such a dreadful description of this Mine, that it might discourage any from attempting the descent; which makes me doubt, whether he had been in any other Mine, especially where the descent is made by Ladders.

This Mine, I was inform'd, hath been wrought 200 years, about the same space of time with Newfors-Mine, but some much shorter in time of the Silver-mine at Schmimitz; and much shorter yet of the notable Lead-mines in upper Carinthia. Some hundreds of men are employed about this Mine of Idria; of which the chief Officers are the Prefect, the Controller, and the Judge.

I heard no complaint of the Damps of this Mine, as I have heard of divers others. Yet the work men are sufficiently mischief'd without them; for, though they be not suddenly suffocated,
yet the Mercury getting into their Bodies, they are languishing ly destroyed by it. Much less could I hear any news of either noxious or innocent Apparitions, Virunculi &c. such as some write, and many talk of in other Mines.

In a Laboratory, where the Quicksilver is separated by Fire, I saw an heap of 16,000. Retorts of Iron; every one of which costs a Crown at the best hand from the Iron-furnaces in Carinthia. There are 800. Retorts and as many Recipients employ’d together, in drawing over the Quicksilver in 16. Furnaces; 50, in each Furnace, 25, of a side, 12, above, and 13, below of each side.

June 12, when I was there, they carried out 40. Saumes of Quicksilver into forrain parts, each Saume containing 315, pound weight, to the value of 400 ducats of Gold. Though the conveyance be not easy, yet some is sent as far as Greinwitz in Hungary, for the use of the Gold-mines; and very much carried away Southward. For, though the River by the Town be but small, yet they are not very far from the Sontius or Lysonzo, a considerable River, which runs into the Gulf of Trieste in the Adriatic Sea.

In the Castle I saw 3000 Saumes of Quicksilver together, in barrels; the Quicksilver being first made up in double leather: And in another house, as much rich Ore, as can be distill’d in 2 years, except they have great plenty of rain to bring down the wood; but, the Hills being high about them, it snows at the tops of them oftener than it rains.

The Countries, through which I pass’d, are singularly well wooded, and well stor’d with fair Trees, wherein, beside such as grow with us in England, are especially Firs, Larches, Pines, Pinasters, Picea’s, and that nobly crisp’d and well grain’d kind of Acer, whereof Viols and Violins are made: Whereof there is also plenty in the Country of Salzburg and Carinthia.

Travelling sometimes in the night, we had continually about us a great number of large Glow-worms, which put into papers gave a dimm light like Candles in Lanthorns; and the Aire al-to full of flaming Flyes, affording some delight to us.

The way unto this place I found difficult; for, travelling from places on the borders of Croatia by Lovitch, I was faine to pass over
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cross'd the River Dravus, and pass'd Mount Labach in the Carnick Alpes, by that noble passage, cut through the Rooks, and vaulted like that of Paulype near Naples, I had a desire to take a view of the Lake of Zirchnitz, so much spoken of, and written on by so few; and therefore I went unto Grainburg upon the River Savus, and so to Labach, the chief City of Carniola, from whence I continued my Journey in Carniola betwixt the Hills and a great Marsh, till I came to Bornizza, two leagues from whence and beyond the Hills is seated the said Lake, receiving that name from Zirchnitz, a town of about 300 houses.

This Lake is near two German Miles long, and one broad. On the South-side thereof lies a great Forrest, wherein are many Deer, and wild Boares, Wolves and Bears. On the North side the Country is flat, but the whole Valley is encompassed with Hills, at some distance from it.

This Lake is well fill'd with Water for the greatest part of the Year; but in the Month of June it sinketh under ground, not only by percolation or falling through the pores of the Earth, but retireth under ground, through many great holes at the bottom of it: And in the Month of September it returns by the same, and so in a very short time fills up the Valley again.

As the time of the waters Descent is short, especially when