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# MARYLAND GAZETTE,

Containing the freshest Advices foreign and domestic.

THURSDAY, July 9, 1752.

*A Description of the Mines of Salt at Wiliska in Poland, with the natural History of the several Sorts of Salt.*

**T**HE Salt which we eat with our Food, and use on many other Occasions in Life, is in England prepared by Art, being made by several Methods from Sea-Water, and the Brine of Salt Springs; and from hence proceed our several Kinds of that useful Commodity. The common white Salt is made by boiling down the Sea-Water. The Bay Salt is made of Sea-Water evaporated only by the Sun's Heat in Pits in the Earth lined with Clay; and what we call Basket Salt, is made from the Brine of the Salt Springs in *Chebbire*, and elsewhere in England, boiled away in the same Manner as the Sea Salt.

The Difference between these three Kinds is, that the Bay Salt is the strongest and fittest for preserving Fish; the common white Salt is of a middle Nature, and fit for preserving Meat; and the Basket Salt is the weakest of all, and is used for eating at Table, having not Strength enough to fit it for any of the other Purposes; tho' under a proper Management, the Brine of these Springs may be made to yield a Salt as strong as any in the World.

Tho' we have this Variety of Salt for the several Uses of Life, the greatest Part of Europe has only one Sort, which is different from all these, and is found lying at great Depths in the Earth, in prodigious Beds, in the Manner of Stone in our Quarries; from whence it is dug with Pickaxes and other Instruments, and then ground to Powder in Mills to make it fit for Use.

There are Mines of this Salt in *Hungary, Catalonia*, and many other Parts of the World, but the greatest in the World is that at *Wiliska* in *Poland*; from which a great Part of the Continent is supplied. *Wiliska* is a small Town not far from *Cracow*, and the Mine now wrought there, has been worked ever since the Year 1251, when it was accidentally discovered in digging for a Well. There are eight Openings, or Descents into this Mine, six in the Field, and two in the Town itself, which are the most used for letting down the Workmen, and taking up the Salt, the others being mostly used for letting in Wood, and other Necessaries. The Openings are five Square, and about four Feet wide, they are lined throughout with Timber, and at the Top of each, there is a large Wheel with a Rope as thick as a Man's Arm, by which Things are let down and drawn up: The Whole done by a Horse.

When a Stranger has the Curiosity to see these Works, he must descend by one of these Holes. He is first to put on a Miner's Coat over his Cloaths, and then being led to the Mouth of one of these Holes, by a Miner who serves as a Guide, the Miner fastens a smaller Rope to the large One, and ties it about himself, so that he fits in it, and then taking the Stranger in his Lap, he gives the Signal to be let down: As there are usually several who go down together, the Custom is, when the first is let down about three Yards, the Wheel stops, and another Miner fastening another Rope to the great One, ties himself, and takes in another Person into his Lap, and being let down three Yards farther, the Wheel stops again for another Pair, and so on 'til the whole Company are seated; then the Wheel is again worked, and the whole String of Adventurers are let down together. It is no uncommon Thing for forty People to go down in this Manner together; when the Wheel is finally set a-going, it never stops till they are all down, but the Descent is very slow and gradual, and it is a very uncomfortable Time, while they all recollect that their Lives depend on the Goodness of the Rope, and slowly are carried down a narrow and dark Well, to the Depth of six hundred Feet perpendicular. This is in reality an immense Depth, but the Terror and Tedioufness of the

Descent makes it appear to most People vastly more than it is.

As soon as the first Miner touches the Ground at the Bottom, he slips out of the Rope, and sets his Companion down on his Legs, and the Rope continues descending till all the rest do the same.

The Place where they are set down here is perfectly dark, but the Miners strike Fire, and light up a small Lamp, by the Means of which, each taking the Stranger he has the Care of by the Arm, they lead them through a Number of strange Passages and Meanders, all descending lower and lower till they come to certain Addits, by which they descend an immense Depth lower still, and this through perfectly dark Passages. The Damp, Cold, and Darkness of these Places, and the Horror of being so many hundreds of Yards Under-ground, generally makes Strangers heartily repent their Expedition before they get thus far; but when at the Bottom, they are well rewarded for their Pain, by a Sight that could never have been expected after so much Horror, and which Nobody would have omitted seeing, tho' at the Expence of ten Times the Trouble, when they once know what it is.

At the Bottom of the last Ladder, the Stranger is received in a small dark Cavern, wall'd up perfectly close on all Sides. The Guide who had a long Time before pretended the utmost Terror on every Apprehension of his Lamp's going out, as declaring they must perish in the Mazes of the Mine if it do, when arrived in this dreary Chamber, puts out his Light as if by Accident; and after a long Time fumbling about, catches the Stranger by the Hand, and drags him through a narrow Crick into the Body of the Mine.

The amazing Structure and Lustre of this Place is scarce to be imagined: It is an immense Plain, containing a whole People, a Kind of subterraneous Republic, with their Houses, Carriages, public Roads, &c. This is wholly hollowed out of one vast Bed of Salt, which is all a hard Rock, as bright and glittering as Crystal; and the whole Space before him is formed of lofty arched Vaults, supported by Columns of the same Salt, and roofed and floored with the same, so that the Columns, and indeed the whole Fabric, seem composed of the purest Crystal.

They have many public Lights in this Place continually burning for the general Use, and the Blaze of these reflected from every Part of the Mine, gives a more glittering Prospect than any Thing above Ground ever came up to.

Were this the whole Beauty of the Place, it were a Miracle, but this is but a small Part of it; the Salt, tho' every where as clear and bright as Crystal, is in some Places coloured with all the Colours of the precious Stones, as blue, yellow, purple, red, and green: There are Multitudes of whole Columns of all these Kinds, and they perfectly look like Masses of Rubies, Emeralds, Amethysts, and Sapphires, darting a Radiance that the Eye can hardly bear, and giving many People Occasion to compare it to the supposed Magnificence of Heaven.

Besides the Variety of Forms of these Vaults, Tables, Arches, and Columns, which are of the Workmen making; as they dig out the Salt: For the keeping up the Roof, there are a vast Variety of others of grotesque and amazing Figures formed by Nature, and these are generally of the purest and brightest Salt of all. The Roofs of the Arches are in many Places full of Salt hanging down in the Form of Icicles, which are as long and thick as a Man's Arm, and of the Colours and Brightness of all the Gems, and the Walks are covered with various Congelations of the same Kind, and the very Floors, where not too much trod and battered, are covered with Globules of the same sort of beautiful Materials.

In various Parts of this spacious Plain, stand the Huts of the Miners and Families, some single, and others in Clusters, making a sort of Villages.

They have very little Communication with the World above Ground; and many hundreds of Persons are born and live all their Lives there. Along the Midst of the Plain lies the Great Road to the Mouth of the Mine; along this there are always a great Number of Carriages passing loaded with the Masses of Salt, cut out of the farther Part of the Mine, and carrying them to the Place, where the Rope belonging to the Wheel receives them.

The Drivers of these Carriages are all merry and singing, and the Salt looks like a Load of Gems. The Horses kept here are a very great Number, and when once let down they never see the Day light again; but most of the Men take frequent Occasions of going up and breathing the Village Air. The Instruments principally used by the Miners, are Pickaxes, Hammers, and Chissels: With these they dig out the Salt in form of huge Cylinders, each of many hundred Weight: This is found the most convenient Method of getting them out of the Mine; and as soon as got above Ground, they are broke into smaller Pieces and sent to the Mills, where they are ground to Powder. The finest Sort of the Salt is frequently cut into Toys, and often passes for real Crystal: This hard Kind makes a great Part of the Floor of the Mine; and what is most surprizing of all in the whole Place, is, that there runs constantly over this, and through a large Part of the Mine, a Spring of fresh Water, sufficient to supply the Inhabitants, and their Horses, so that they need not to have any from above Ground. The Horses usually grow blind after they have been some little Time in the Mine, but they do as well for Service afterwards as before.

After admiring the Wonders of this amazing Place, it is no very comfortable Remembrance to the Stranger, that he is to go back again through the same dismal Way he came; and indeed the Journey is not much better than the Prospect; the only Means of getting up is by the Rope and Wheel, and little more Ceremony being used in it than in the Drawing up of a Piece of Salt.

L I S B O N, February 1.

**W**E have received Advice, that there has lately been a smart Rencontre between the Garrison of Mezagam and the Moors, the Particulars whereof are: The Inhabitants of that Place being in great want of Wood, Don Antonio Alvarez de Cunha, Governor of that City, was determined, at all Hazards, to furnish them with a sufficient Supply of that Commodity out of the adjacent Forest; and for that Purpose, on the 7th of Dec. last, he gave Orders to Don John Froes de Brito, to march with a Detachment of 200 Soldiers out of the Garrison, in order to skreen and protect such Labourers as should be employed in cutting down what Wood they wanted.

Whilst the Labourers, however, were busy in their Operations, 2000 Moors came precipitately upon the Portuguese.

Don Antonio Alvarez de Cunha, being apprehensive of their meeting with some Opposition, was prepared for such an Event; and upon the first Notice that he received of Don John Froes de Brito's being attacked, he marched directly to his Assistance; and as the Ecemies were repulsed on all Sides, he did not only bring home his Men triumphant, but brought away all the Wood that had been cut down.

The Moors in this Rencontre lost a great Number of their Men, but the Portuguese had only 3 of their Soldiers kill'd, and 6 wounded.

*Turin, March 20.* A singular Affair happened here a few Days ago, the Circumstances of which are as follows:—A Soldier of the Regiment of Savoy, who had deserted about four Years ago, since travelled up and down the Country, and carried on the Business of a Pedlar, in which he succeeded so well, that he sent his Wife, whom he left