

yards, and the Thorne Colliery is opening out at a depth of 916 yards. The thickness of the workable seams varies from 9 ft. in the Barnsley bed to 1 ft. 9 in. in the "Cat" coal.

The special qualities of the coal found in particular localities have largely influenced the development of the metallurgical industries carried on in its neighbourhood. The great reputation, for instance, of Low Moor iron is said to be partly attributable to the character of the coal used in its manufacture. In Sheffield, too, the steel-maker uses by preference certain seams of coal for his Siemens furnace, and chooses coke derived from the coal of other seams in making crucible steel.

Coal has probably been worked and used in Yorkshire as long as anywhere else in the British Isles. The frequent occurrence of coal and iron deposits together gave rise in that area to a remote metallurgical industry, of which history affords no trace, but which is evidenced to-day by the presence of furnace slag and coal ashes in the remains of Roman and pre-Roman operations. There are, however, records of the working of coal at Silkstone, near Barnsley, and near Rotherham in the thirteenth century. A field called Netherhalge which contained a coal mine was leased by Thomas de Schefeld to Esmond Fitzwilliam in the fourteenth century. There are numerous historic references to the working of coal near Sheffield during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. No accurate records of the extent of working and consumption of coal in Yorkshire exist prior to 1870; but it is doubtful if, say, in 1850 the quantity of coal raised in Yorkshire exceeded 3,000,000 tons per annum. The shallow workings were from the western outcrop, and have extended eastward as mining engineering became capable of dealing with deep sinking. But the modern coalfield, though greatly developed in recent years, is really of a respectable age. It has given rise to