

this tendency in a marked degree, and their predecessors, whose history is shrouded in darkness, seem to have been moved by similar impulses. Thus the common ore of lead, or galena, was much prized by the former inhabitants of North America, though there is, thus far, no conclusive evidence of their having understood how to render it serviceable by melting. Quite considerable quantities of this shining mineral have been met in the mounds of Ohio. On the hearth of one of the sacrificial mounds of that State, Messrs. Squier and Davis discovered a deposit of galena, in pieces weighing from two ounces to three pounds, the whole quantity amounting perhaps to thirty pounds. The sacrificial fire had not been strong enough to convert the ore into pure metal, though some of the pieces showed the beginning of fusion.\* As stated before, there is no definite proof that the aborigines were acquainted with the process of reducing lead from its ore; for as yet no leaden implements or ornaments have been discovered that can be ascribed with certainty to the former population. The peculiarly shaped object of pure lead figured on page 209 of the "Ancient Monuments," which came to light while a well was sunk within the ditch of the earth-work at Circleville, Ohio, was perhaps made by whites, or by Indians at a period when they already had acquired from the former the knowledge of casting lead. This curious relic is in possession of Dr. Davis, and I have often examined it. The archaeological collection of the Smithsonian Institute contains not a single Indian article of lead, but quantities of galena, which were taken from various mounds. Yet, supposing the Indians had known the fusibility of galena, the lead extracted therefrom could not have afforded them great advantages, considering that its very nature hardly admitted of any useful application. "Too soft for axes or knives, too fusible for vessels, and too soon tarnished to be valuable for ornament, there was little inducement for its manufacture."—(Squier and Davis.) However, in making net-sinkers, it would have been preferable to the flat pebbles notched on two opposite sides, which the natives used as weights for their nets. Pebbles of this description abound in the valley of the Susquehanna and in various other places of the United States, especially in the neighborhood of rivers.

The frequent occurrence of galena on the altars of the sacrificial mounds proves, at any rate, that the ancient inhabitants attributed a peculiar value to it, deeming it worthy to be offered as a sacrificial gift. The pieces of galena found in Ohio were, in all probability, obtained in Illinois or Missouri, from which regions they were transferred by way of barter, as we may presume, to the Ohio valley. No original deposits of galena are known in greater proximity that could have furnished pieces equal to those taken from the mounds of Ohio.

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\*Ancient Monuments, pp. 149 and 209.