

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 7th. February 1857.

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Advert - Investment for Capital.

British Mining Shares are the safest, and most profitable means for investment of capital. The Dividend mines are free from risk and liability, and pay from 15 to 25 percent per annum: in dividends payable every two or three months. The dividends paid on British Mines for the last 12 years have been £2,908,670-12-0d. The dividends paid on 54 mines in 1855, were £340,714-3-4d. and on 55 mines in 1856, were £383,418-8-8d., showing an increase of £42,704-5-4d. The progressive, or non-dividend mines have been known in many instances to advance from 100 to 1000 percent profit in the outlay within a few months after purchase. Many of these shares are now to be purchased at very low prices, and with present prospects of the mines cannot fail to prove most remunerative.

The undersigned having a extensive correspondence in Cornwall and Devon, receives all the earliest information relative to improvements, etc, consequently can recommend to those parties seeking safe and bona fide investments those shares which are likely to prove most profitable.

Every information given personally, or by letter, and a list of the most promising mines forwarded on application to Henry Gould Sharp, Mining Share Broker, 2, Church Court, Clements Lane, Lombard Street, London.

P.S. All country communications will receive prompt attention.

Bankers: London and Westminster Bank, Lothbury.

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Chesterfield Police.

Saturday January 31st.

(Before E.G. Maynard and G. Heathcote Esqs.).

Caution to Colliers - Imprisonment for Leaving Work and Smoking in Mines.

John Kirk, Francis Myford, James Nightingale, George Mettam, and John Nixon, were brought up charged with leaving their work, contrary to the rules of the pit on which they were employed, at Springwell, Staveley.

Mr. Buxton, surveyor, and Mr. Smith, foreman of the mine, attended to prosecute. The charges against James Nightingale and John Nixon were first proceeded with.

It appeared from the evidence of Smith, that on the 29th. of January, all the prisoners descended into the pit, and a certain portion of work was marked out by witness for each. Having done so he left them, and on his return shortly afterwards he found that they had all left the mine, without touching the work, or giving him any notice of their intention not to do so. There was no danger in the spot he had marked out for them, nor was there any reason whatever for their leaving the mine in the manner described. It was further proved that each of the defendants had signed a contract with the overlooker for an indefinite period, and also the rules, for violation of which the present prosecution was made. Nightingale, in defence, said that when they went down to the mine, the foreman (Smith) put them on a strange piece of work, and they asked him what they were to be paid for it? Smith answered that he did not know, when they all told him they would not begin work till they knew how much they were to have for it. The foreman entirely denied the truth of this statement.

Nightingale: Didn't we tell you that we shouldn't stop?

The Foreman: I left you at your supper.

Nightingale: But didn't we tell you we shouldn't stop? Foreman: You did not. You said you would have your supper "and work on the strength of it." Nightingale asked the witness whether they had not asked him what price they were to be paid for their work, but the question appeared to be "fenced" till ultimately he said they had not questioned him at all on the subject.

The same charge was then preferred against Mettam, who asserted that he went down the pit to work on the day in question, but found none marked out for him. When the foreman came down, he took him to the place where Nightingale and the others were at work, and marked him out a piece there. Prisoner asked what price he was to be paid for it? The foreman said he could not tell him. The prisoner then told him he should not begin work till he knew how much he was to receive for it, and when the foreman left he and his companions told him they were going, and followed him out.

The foreman declared this statement was untrue, and positively denied that any one of the prisoners had said a word to him about leaving.

Mr. Maynard: Did you see Mettam leave? Foreman: I did not.

Mr. Maynard: Did he tell you he should not commence work till you had set a price on it?

Foreman: It isn't likely I should fix a price on it - It wasn't in my power to do so.

Mr. Maynard: But did he tell you so? Answer the question plainly. Foreman: He did not.

Mr. Busby: I suppose you have a uniform price for all such descriptions of work? Mr. Buxton: Oh, Yes. This is only an excuse to get themselves off.

Mr. Maynard: Are they not engaged by their contract to work at anything you set them? The foreman replied that they were bound to do so both by the contract and the rules.

All the prisoners having made the same statement as the above, Mr. Maynard asked whether the prosecution had any reason to think any one of them was worse than the others? Mr. Buxton said that Kirk was altogether unmanageable: This was not the first time he had left his work in a similar manner.

Mr. Maynard, addressing the prisoners, said "You probably know that we have the power to imprison you for three months, with hard labour, for the offence of which you have been guilty. If you are not careful you will go on until we are compelled to resort to that punishment. You know perfectly well the engagement you entered upon, and you were bound to perform it. If you want to leave work, the rules which you had signed specify that you should have given a months notice. I shall commit Nixon, Nightingale, Myford, and Mettam to prison for 21 days, with hard labour, and Kirk - who, though the youngest, seems to have been the ring-leader - to 28 days imprisonment, with hard labour. Nightingale pleaded that it was the first time he had ever done such a thing, and hoped the punishment would not be inflicted that time. The sentence, however, was not altered.

James King, miner, employed in the same mine as the above, was charged with smoking while in the pit, in violation of the 20th. Rule which runs as follows: "That no person shall try the workings or goaves for firedamp with a naked light, no person shall smoke tobacco, use or leave a naked light or Lucifer matches, where safety lamps are ordered to be used". Defendant pleaded guilty, but said that there were six or seven smoking besides himself at the time he was arrested, and that it was common practise. Mr. Buxton said that the men who worked on the same part as the prisoner had been suspected of smoking, and a watch having been set on them, the prisoner was detected with a pipe in his mouth. The practice was highly dangerous, and, it was greatly on the increase, it was now necessary to make an example. The court sentenced the prisoner to 21 days imprisonment with hard labour. Mr. Maynard commenting severely on the wickedness of indulging in a habit which might, at any moment, have destroyed so many of his fellow-creatures. King begged hard to be let off, saying that it was the first time he had smoked in the mine, and promised that he would not do so again. It was very hard. Mr. Maynard: "It would have been much harder if you had all been blown up together. If you come here again you will be punished far more heavily, and perhaps when you have served your term, you will tell your companions what is in store for them if they commit the same offence."

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No Headline

The masons and quarrymen of Stanton, near Bakewell, being out of employ through the frost and snow, they went to W.P. Thornhill, Esq., M.P., to ask him to give them a days rabbiting on account of their being out of employ. He kindly gave them two days on his ground, and a present of £5 to be divided amongst them.

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Accident.

On Tuesday morning a severe accident befell a labourer employed at the Speight-Hill Ironstone Works belonging to the Wingerworth Iron Company. Whilst engaged in conducting a loaded wagon down the inclined railway leading to the works, it gained such a velocity, owing to the slippery state of the rails, that he could not check it, before it came into contact with two other loaded ones, standing on the lime some distance from the foot of the incline. He was thrown with great force over the wagon, sustaining a dislocation of the kneecap and other severe injuries, which rendered him unable to rise from the ground. He was at once conveyed home in the cart, and medical assistance was called in as speedily as it could be obtained. Though dangerously injured, there is hope of his recovery.

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Colliery Accident near Wigan.

On Saturday last, an accident, resulting in the instantaneous death of two men, named John Hodgkinson, aged 42 years, and Robert Milnes, 24, occupied in the Lindsay Coal Mine, at Whalley. The deceased were employed in repairing the air pipes, near to the top of the shaft of the pit in question, which belongs to the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres, when, after they had been so engaged a short time, the rope by which the cage in which they were standing was suspended, broke, and the men were precipitated to the bottom of the shaft, a distance of about 60 yards. In the fall the deceased first alighted upon the scaffolding erected at the bottom of the pit, above what is called the "Dip Hole" (a kind of tank for the reception of all the water that usually flows through a coalmine, whence it is pumped out of the pit at intervals), the temporary covering of which was broken by the shock, and the men immersed in the tank, which was five feet deep in water. Besides the injuries which the deceased men must have received in the fall, and the concussion with the dip-hole, covering almost the whole of the rope, which would have been several hundred pounds in weight, and which broke near the verticals, fell upon them, and must have killed them instantaneously. Assistance was procured immediately after the accident happened, but upwards of an hour transpired before the dead bodies were found and removed from the pit to their own homes.

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Fatal Colliery Accident.

On Monday last a fatal accident happened at Earl FitzWilliams coalmine, at Upper Elsecar, near Barnsley, to a man named John Burgan, who resides at Hemingfield. The poor fellow was engaged in getting coal, when a very large quantity fell upon him, and he was so fearfully crushed and mangled, that not the slightest hope was then entertained that he would recover. He was conveyed to his home, and medical aid was procured. He lingered in fearful agony till the following day (Tuesday) when death ended his sufferings. The unfortunate deceased was about 46 years of age, and has left a widow and two children to lament his untimely loss.

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Page 2 Col. 1.

Advert - Stoney Way Mines, Matlock.

A meeting of the projectors and shareholders of this undertaking will take place on Tuesday, 12th day of March next at the house of Mr. Timothy Spencer, the Wheatsheaf Inn, in Matlock, at the hour of 12 o'clock at noon, for the purpose of registering the shares already taken, up receiving applications for the limited number of shares which remain unappropriated, appointing directors and management, and arranging to commence operations. In the meantime applications for shares to made to Mr. Charles Walker, where plans, etc, may be inspected.

Matlock, 17th. February, 1857.

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No Headline.

Alfred Wright was summoned by Joseph Randle, a workman at the Inkermann Colliery, for refusing to pay him the sum of £1-6-8d, alleged by plaintiff to be due to him for work performed. The claim was denied by the defendant, who asserted that he had paid Randle every farthing due to him except for 1-8d. After some further contradictory evidence, defendant was ordered to pay the amount claimed.

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Wages Case.

Daniel Cooper appeared on behalf of Richard Barrow, Esq., to answer a complaint brought by Benjamin Rodgers, of refusing to pay arrears of wages alleged by complainant to be due to him, while working at the Speight-hill mines.

Mr. Busby appeared for the defendant.

Rogers stated that on the 3rd. of November he gave a months notice and left his work. During the week he was away he was sent for to come back for the purpose of giving a regular notice. He accordingly went back on the 8th. of December, to work another month, and as the notice he had previously given was asserted to be informal, he offered to work for a month and six days, the six to make up for the time he had been away. This, however, he was not allowed to do, being told that he should work for an entire month if he did any portion of it.

On the part of the defendant it was alleged that no notice had been given. It was however shown that plaintiff's coals had been stopped, which proved that the authorities were aware of his intention to leave his work. The case was ultimately dismissed, Mr. Cooper agreeing to give plaintiff the fair market value of the coals that had been stopped.

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Dreadful Colliery accident at Lund Hill, near Wombwell.

Reported loss of upwards of 100 lives.

The scene of the present catastrophe is Lund Hill Colliery, situated about one mile from Wombwell on the South Yorkshire Railway, and five miles from Barnsley, the property of Messrs. Taylor, Gallon and Company, on the estate of the late Samuel Swift Esq., of Hemingfield. From the facts we have been able to collect it would seem that yesterday (Thursday), shortly after twelve o'clock, a loud explosion took place in this pit, which is nearly 200 yards in depth. The shock was felt for some miles around. The workmen on the top of the pit were first alarmed by the corfe employed in drawing the coal, being blown into the headgear, followed by a dense body of sulphurous vapour. Cries of distress were shortly afterwards heard at the bottom of the pit, but the after-damp was so strong that it was quite impossible for anyone to descend, either to render the slightest assistance or ascertain the fate of those at that time employed in it, and who it is estimated would number not less than 180. At the time of our leaving the pit (five o'clock) these calls for assistance had not been again heard, and hence there is reason to fear that the whole or greater portion of them may have perished. The only hope is that as the fire in the cupola has been revived, since the explosion, some lives may have been spared. The rod which communicates with the signal was blown up by the explosion, and thus it was impossible to ascertain by this means the effect of the accident. Immediately the occurrence became known the approaching roads to the scene of this fearful disaster were thronged by parties whose families or friends were employed at these works, anxious to hear their fate. The trains from Barnsley were likewise crowded to an excess, and while all around was involved in doubt, preparations were at once made for the worst contingency which probably had befallen the workmen.

Lund Hill Colliery has been opened for nearly two years, and during that period has been worked day and night, the quantity of coal raised exceeding by far any other pit in the neighbourhood. The Dearne and Canal runs within a short distance, and hence its position is such that it has commanded an extended trade both by water and rail. The only accident, involving loss of life, which has previously taken place at this pit, was during its sinking, from one of the men employed incautiously taking out a naked candle, when the gas immediately exploded, having accumulated from Saturday to Monday following the day on which it occurred. This occasioned the loss of either two or three lives. Since then it has been creditably conducted, and had the reputation of being perfectly safe from firedamp.

Further Particulars.

Lund Hill Colliery, Seven o'clock.

The excitement still increases. At half-past five o'clock, a corfe, or underground wagon, which had been blown upwards and got fixed in the shaft was removed, when Mr. Coe, the underground manager, proceeded down, with others to assist him. He found the passages leading into the mine partially blocked up, and together with twelve men alive. They were immediately drawn out and found to be severely burnt. Five of them were able to walk home, but the other seven had to be conveyed. None of them could give any intelligible account of the origin of the accident, but from what they say the painful inference that can be drawn is that

they are the only survivors of 171 who went down into the pit in the morning. Mr. Coe, the underground manager, had been in the pit about a quarter of an hour previous to the accident, and there was at that time not the slightest indication of the danger which so shortly afterwards followed.

Friday Morning, 4 a.m.

Three of the men recovered yesterday afternoon have since died of injuries received in the explosion.

All the fire engines have returned to Sheffield.

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As two men were repairing some machinery at the top of the shaft of the Lindsay Coal Mine, near Wigan, the rope broke, and they were precipitated to the bottom and killed.

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No Headline.

Ironstone of the finest quality has just been obtained close to the village of Blackburn, Linlithgowshire.

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Page 1 Col. 1.

Advert - Wanted.

A portable engine, from 4 to 6 horse-power, with boiler, etc, complete, for winding purposes. Particulars to be sent to Mr. James Hudson, West Staveley Colliery Offices, Whittington, near Chesterfield.