

Illustrated London News

Saturday 2nd. October 1858

No Headline

A Riot took place on Friday week at Hoyle Mill, near Barnsley, where the men employed at the Oaks Colliery are still on strike. An attempt at a settlement between the masters and men having failed, a number of colliers from the Midland and Northern coal fields have been imported, and, to make way for these, many of the old hands have been ejected from the houses they held under the proprietors of the colliery, and have taken up their residence in tents, each receiving about 10s. a week from the Colliers' Association. On Friday evening a party of men, clearly strangers, made their appearance at the place, mustering at an inn which is much frequented by the "black sheep," as the strange workmen are called. A quarrel was soon got up, and the mob, after putting the "black sheep" to flight, broke all the windows of the inn, then marched into the village, and made a furious assault upon the houses of the newly-engaged men. The windows of sixty houses were entirely demolished. The next morning only three of the new hands presented themselves for work, the rest being afraid of further violence. The police, who were too weak to interfere with the rioters, have been reinforced.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 2nd October 1858

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Advert: T.O. Pierce's Grassmoor Coal, Birchill New Colliery Hasland.

Orders received by G. Thompson, Grocer, Beetwell Street, Chesterfield, or at the Colliery.  
6d per ton off for cash.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 2nd October 1858

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Wages.

Joseph Salt, a contractor to the Dunston and Barlow Company, was summoned for non-payment of £1-1-9d to George Johnson, miner, and £1-0-0d, owing to his son, for work done in the pit at Sheepbridge, for defendant. The Case being not clearly proved to the magistrates, they advised him to bring an action in the County Court, it being a contract between the parties.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 9th. October 1858

Dreadful Fire in a Coalpit.

A terrible calamity took place on Thursday week, as briefly reported in this Journal last week, in the Page Bank Colliery, about four miles from Durham. At about nine o'clock in the morning the man working outside, according to one account, heard a loud report, and in an instant, flames issued from the mouth of the pit, and the whole woodwork of the shaft was on fire. Another account says there was no explosion, but that the woodwork of the shaft became accidentally fired. At this time there were more than eighty men and boys known to be in the pit. The smoke which poured up the shaft in volumes rendered a descent impossible ; the only way was to pour water down, which was done by means of three fire-engines. In order, also, to try and relieve the unfortunate men in the pit, canvas was procured, and so arranged as to create a downward current of fresh air. This lasted all day, and, the pumping apparatus of the pit being destroyed by the explosion, there was a rush of 450 gallons of water per minute into the workings, without reckoning that poured down by the engines. Between fire and water, therefore, it seemed little short of miraculous if any one could be saved. The fire continued to rage all Thursday night and all day Friday, but towards Friday evening was subdued. It was then, however, found that the shaft was choked with charred timbers, and the removal of these was vigorously commenced.

At twenty-five minutes past eight on Friday evening the workers at the shaft heard shouts from the bottom of the pit. The thrilling sensations of joy at the scarcely-expected sound was such as cannot possibly be described. John Nicholson, of Cassop, who had volunteered to go down, from a conviction that the men could be saved, attempted the rescue, but returned without any of his fellows. At this juncture great numbers of men from many different collieries came to relieve those who had been toiling all the night and previous day. At twenty minutes to nine bread was provided for the men at the bottom of the shaft, but owing to the intense heat and smoke, it could not be sent down the pit. At ten minutes to nine such a strong column of steam came up as to put a stop for a time to all efforts. About twenty-five minutes past ten the first body of men went down. Only two minutes had elapsed when the signal-bell was rang, and the signal to bend up was given. At twenty-seven minutes past eleven John Nicholson, of Cassop, had the honour of bringing the first boy, whose name was Emmerson, to the bank safely and in good spirits. On this a rivalry ensued amongst the men - who seemed to deem their own lives as nothing in their attempts to save their fellow-men - as to who should go down the pit. At five minutes past eleven the first man was brought to bank, stimulants and blankets being in readiness for the occasion. The boys who were afterwards brought up were carried on men's shoulders to the various houses near the pit, which formed, as it were, so many hospitals in which every attention was paid to those who most needed it. The women on this occasion, as in all others of a like nature, were truly assiduous. At eight minutes past eleven, one boy and an aged furnace-man were brought up ; the latter, suffering and shivering extremely from cold, had to be carried away, and for some time no hopes were entertained of his restoration. A young man was brought up, and on the men attempting to take hold of him, he exclaimed, "I can do well enough by myself ;" and one man, who was informed, as soon as put into bed, called out for "baccy," as he had not had a pipe for twenty-four hours. Up to one o'clock in the afternoon, by great exertion, seventeen boys and nineteen men were got safely out. We regret to say that in the midst of so much suffering and anxiety there was great callousness shown by hundreds of able-bodied men, who refused to relieve those who had been at the pumps for twelve hours together, or to render the least assistance in any way, but who ate and drank without compunction of the refreshments provided for those who helped without murmuring! A few minutes after three Mr. Cooke, an under-viewer, who had volunteered to descend at six minutes

past twelve, was brought up in a prostrate and feeble condition. Mr. W. Hall, another under-viewer, and a volunteer, was brought up lame, having sprained his ankle. At three o'clock in the afternoon a man was brought up, who stated that the men and boys, who had now endured thirty-six hours of suspense in the pit, were beginning to be "very bad," and requested that some water and stimulants might be sent down to them, and more men to search the workings. This request was immediately responded to. At half past four the two last of the men who came up alive were brought to bank, making a total - men and boys - of seventy-six persons saved. At this time, after the last survivors had been landed, Mackay, the shaftsman, again descended with sheets and a chain : he presently appeared with two dead bodies. Four such ascents were made, each with a man and a boy.

One of the men thus marvellously preserved states that on Thursday night seventeen or eighteen of the imprisoned men and boys gathered round the furnace fire, and remained there for a considerable time until they were afraid that the gas would be drawn to the fire, and so cause an explosion. To prevent this calamity they put out the fire, and remained in darkness until they were rescued, with the exception of a glimmering light or two for a short period. Other men and boys were in other parts of the workings. One man, on being asked how they spent the time, said he laid down to sleep at nine o'clock and slept soundly. Many engaged in prayer, and others joked, in order to keep up their spirits, especially the boys.

The men found in the workings were nearly all in a comotose state, and presented the appearance of having been drugged, but were partially restored by a plentiful application of cold water. Those in the workings who retained possession of their senses dared not make towards the mouth of the shaft because, being in total darkness, they were afraid of being lost in the intricacies of the mine. Those who were found dead had evidently died a painless death, having by an insensible gradation passed from sleep into eternity.

The fate of George Robson, deputy-overman, was exceedingly melancholy. He had been at the bottom of the shaft up to the time fifty of the men and boys had been got out, and had manifested the greatest anxiety for those who had been under his control. He afterwards wandered off unperceived into the workings, and the impure air had, it is supposed, affected his senses, for when found, some time subsequently, he was lying in the water, with his clothes off, and his watch under his head, having apparently laid down with the belief that he was going to bed.

The fire continued to burn throughout the whole of the Saturday ; and early on Sunday morning two explosions of gas took place in the shaft. It was then resolved to try and expel the gas by an explosion of gunpowder ; and for this purpose one of the small cannons belonging to Mr. W. L. Wharton, of Durham, was procured. After being rammed with powder to the very muzzle, a fusee was attached, and it was let down the shaft as far as the "blower." Soon afterwards it exploded with a terrible report, which shook all the houses in the neighbourhood. The rebound snapped the heavy chain to which the cannon was attached, and the cannon fell into the water at the bottom of the pit. Several blasts of gunpowder were afterwards tried, and, after some barrels had been exploded, the light of the "blower" was extinguished about four o'clock on Sunday afternoon. In the meantime after it had been discovered that there was so much gas, the most careful precautions were taken to avoid an explosion. Thirteen engines were at work on Sunday pouring their continuous streams of water into the pit ; but they were discontinued on Sunday evening, and the staple was then filled up with rubbish. On Monday morning there was no indications of fire in the drift, and it was believed to be completely extinguished.

The Lord Bishop of Durham visited the scene, and administered spiritual consolation to the bereaved and the sick.

[We intend to illustrate the scene of this terrible calamity next week.]

Illustrated London News

Saturday 9th. October 1858

No Headline

The Oaks Colliery Strike has come to an end, after lasting eighteen weeks, having caused an enormous expenditure by the masters, and also cost the Miners' Association upwards of £2000. On Friday week the proprietors received a deputation of the turn-outs at the request of the latter. The men having previously arranged with the "black sheep," about twenty of that body were present, and arrangements were drawn up which all parties signed. On Monday the pit resumed its former busy aspect. Several men have been sentenced to imprisonment for the recent attacks upon the "black sheep" in connection with the strike.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 9th October 1858

No Headline

On Monday, at the Townhall, Little Bolton, two colliers were charged with working with naked candles, and another with taking off the top of his safety-lamp, in a pit at Kersley. They were fined - the two first 20s. and costs, and the other 10s. and costs.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 9th October 1858

Page 2 Col. 4

No Headline.

A few days ago, as eight men were descending the Victoria Pit, at Ebbw Vale, one of the chains became loose when about 40 fathoms from the bottom of the shaft, and the cage was overturned. Four of the men were precipitated to the bottom, by which one was instantly killed and the others dangerously injured. The other four held on to the cage and were saved.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 9th October 1858

Page 3 Col. 4

Deaths (part).

On Sunday last, at Foolow, near Tideswell, Wm. Wyatt, Esq., after a lingering illness. The above gentleman was agent at Lord Denman, Andrew Brittlebank, Esq., and many others, besides being extensively connected with mining operations in this division of the county.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 9th October 1858

Page 4 Col. 4

Termination of the Oaks Colliery Strike.

The strike at the Oaks Colliery, which has excited so much interest in the South Yorkshire district, and which has lasted upwards of 18 weeks, was brought to a conclusion on Saturday last, the terms being such as to satisfy both masters and men. The strike, which has caused a large expenditure on the part of the masters, and which has also cost the Miners' Association upwards of £2000, and has been the means of introducing several novelties upon the mode in which strikes have hitherto been conducted. Several men have also been sentenced to various terms of imprisonment for taking part in the proceedings. On Friday evening two of the proprietors, Messrs. Wilson and Marshall, received a deputation of turn-outs, at the request of the latter, the men having previously arranged with the "blacksheep", about 20 of that body being present. After some discussion, an agreement, which had the consent of the "blacksheep", was drawn up. It was to the following effect:- "The men to go in at the old terms (before the introduction of the 15 percent reduction), and those then working in the pit to draw tolls with the turnouts for the places to work in. Proceedings against the eight men in custody, charged with being concerned in the late outrage, to be dropped; the turnouts to pay one-half of the expense of repairing the damage done by the attack on the houses on the 24th ult.; no partiality to be shown, nor the leaders to be singled out or sacrificed." On Saturday the men took their tools into the pit and fixed upon their respective places of work, and on Monday morning the pit resumed its former busy appearance. On Saturday the police force which had been stationed for some time at Hoyle Mill returned to Wakefield, the headquarters of the West Riding Constabulary, there being no further call for their services. On the same day the 8 men in custody on the charge of riot were also discharged, no evidence being offered against them.

Manchester Examiner.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 16th. October 1858

The Fire at the Page-Bank Colliery. -

[An engraving with the caption "The Page Bank Colliery-Pit on Fire."]

The details of this terrible disaster, which took place on Thursday fortnight, have been given in previous numbers of this Journal, and on the preceding page we engrave the scene of the calamity. Page Bank, one of the Byer-Green Collieries, worked by Messrs. Jackson and Co., of West Hartlepool, is situated about four miles from the city of Durham. The shaft of the pit is forty-five fathoms deep and fifteen feet wide. The fire is supposed to have started by a spark from the furnace falling into the shaft, and setting fire to the brattices. Immediately after its discovery, one of the overmen went down and sent orders through the workings for all to repair to the shaft-mouth, but the fire extended so rapidly that he only had time himself to escape before the shaft was one mass of fire, thus stopping all egress. An attempt was made by two of the overmen to descend, but they had not proceeded more than twelve or thirteen yards when they were driven back by a sulphurous vapour rising. Of the eighty-six men and boys who were in the pit seventy-six were on Friday se'nnight drawn up alive.

A reporter of a local paper thus describes the bringing up of the dead:- "At half-past four, when the last of the living had been brought to daylight, a fearful signal was observed to be given by Mackay, the staitesman. It was well understood, and the hopes which had up to that time been kept alive in the relatives of those still in the pit that those dear to them might be saved were destroyed. A chain and sheets were given to the staitesman. With these he descended into the dark abyss on his fearful errand. The excitement and anxiety were now painfully intensified. After a longer interval than usual, the signal was given; one dead body had been fastened to the staitesman, breast to breast; the rope was raised a yard or two, another corpse was slung to the rope, and now the dreadful load is being drawn up. The women cluster to the pit-mouth and the bodies arrive. The first is that of a fine boy, about thirteen years of age. There is a beautiful expression upon his countenance, and nothing to indicate that his young life had been taken by a violent death. The body is unstrung, and a stalwart miner carries it with the tenderness and gentleness of a mother nursing her child to the anxious crowd. The child is recognised by its parents and sisters, and cries of agony rend the air. The other brought up is enveloped in a shroud; it is taken from the ropes, and the announcement that it is poor Kellett is made. Renewed wailings startle the spectators as he is borne to his home. This fearful scene is five times repeated. Each time to rope ascends it brings with it two corpses, one of a boy, another of a man. They are placed on stretchers, and taken to the crowd to be recognised and claimed, and the repetition of the same frightful scene produces the deepest feeling of awe and horror."

The workings have been examined, and, notwithstanding the long suspension of all ventilation, they have been found perfectly free from gas. In every respect the colliery is uninjured, beyond the damage to the shaft itself. Immediate measures were taken for effectually repairing the brattices and the injury done by the fire.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 16th. October 1858

No Headline

A slate quarry situated near Festiniog, North Wales, belonging to Mr. Holland, is lighted with gas.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 16th October 1858

Page 1 Col. 2

Advert - Boythorpe Colliery.

The above colliery having undergone thorough repairs, parties may now rely on being supplied with coals and slack in any quantity, and superior in quality, to any previously offered at the above colliery, and at the lowest possible prices.

Application for prices, etc., to be made to Mr. Spray, at the machine, opposite the Gas House.

A. and L. Ludlam, Proprietors

October 13th 1858.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 16th October 1858

Page 3 Col. 1

Haslam Pipe Lead Mine.

From the manager's report, now before us, we learn that the speculators in this mine have considerable cause for rejoicing, the workmen having arrived at a very good vein of ore. A building for the safe keeping of the same is in course of erection, and there is, we are told, a good prospect for a speedy return from the capital invested. The directors have taken advantage of this piece of good luck, and informed all shareholders in arrears, that "the calls" must be paid up forthwith.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 16th October 1858

Page 3 Col. 2

The Colliers of West Yorkshire

On Monday morning the colliers of the Leeds district met at the Accommodation Road, York Road, and formed themselves into a procession, and traversed the principal streets of Leeds in their progress to Woodhouse Moor, where they had announced a public meeting. Although the weather was very unfavourable, a smart shower of rain falling during the whole of the proceedings there, there was a large gathering on the Moor, about 1,200 miners being present. The chair was taken by Henry Shaw, of Leeds, who stated that several miners who had intended to speak were attending a general meeting of miners delegates at Northumberland. Several speakers addressed the meeting, and David Thorp, of "The Bank", Leeds, in an energetic speech, recommended the miners to stick by their Association and proposed a resolution, advising the men to remain out until the obnoxious 15 percent reduction was withdrawn. The resolution was unanimously carried, and the proceedings, which had been very orderly throughout, then terminated.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 23rd October 1858

Page 2 Col. 3

Crown Court - Thursday October 21st.

William Bunting, aged 22, collier, was charged with stealing, on the 30th of June last, 7lbs weight of brass, from an engine-house, the property of Thos. Carrington and others, of Walton, in the night of the 30th June. The Jury found a verdict of guilty. The Chairman, in passing a sentence, said that prisoner had been several times in gaol already - for trespass, night poaching, assaults, and the last time for attempting to commit a felony, and the sentence of the Court now was that he be imprisoned for one year, with hard labour.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 23rd October 1858

Page 2 Col. 4

No Headline.

The colliers of the Wigan district held a meeting on Tuesday evening, and resolved to apply to their employers for an advance of 2d in the shilling upon their present wages, as soon as an organisation can be effected, so as to make the demand .... .. The speakers were very temperate, and professed an anxiety to avoid strikes.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 23rd October 1858

Page 2 Col. 5

Advert - To Sinkers

45 to 50 yards of sinking, to be let by tender at the Wallsend Colliery. Apply for particulars to Mr. Wm. Baker, manager.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 23rd October 1858

Page 3 Col. 1

Accident.

On Monday, the 14th inst, a distressing accident happened to one of Mr. Raines's sons, of Duckmanton, farmer. The boy, it appears, goes to school at Staveley, and in passing the Speedwell Colliery he got upon a train of bind to ride, going to the tip, and in trying to get off his foot slipped, and he fell upon the rails, the train going over his thighs, one of which is broken. We are glad to hear he is going on very favourably under the care of Mr. Thorpe, surgeon, of Staveley.

Illustrated London News

Saturday 30th. October 1858

The Primrose Colliery Disaster.

The inquest on the bodies of the fourteen colliers who were suffocated in the Primrose Colliery, four miles from Neath, on the 13th inst., was held on Monday at Alltwen, near the colliery, before Mr. A. Cuthberton, coroner for this district of the County of Glamorgan. The jury found a verdict of "Accidental Death."

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 30th October 1858

Page 2 Col. 1

Alarming Occurrence while Hunting.

On Saturday, a good day's sport with the Aspull Harriers had well nigh been marred by an occurrence of a very painful fatal character.

Mr. E.S. Kearsley, of Lee Height, near Bolton, was one of "the field", and, when the scent was in the neighbourhood of Standish, near Wigan, that gentleman jumped some rails onto the bank of a colliery railway, when his horse's hind leg went through some old rotten timber, grown over with grass, which concealed the mouth of an old colliery shaft. For a few seconds the noble steed struggled desperately to obtain a firm footing, but he was unable to do so and at last a portion of the surface bank giving way, he fell backwards to the bottom of the pit and was killed on the spot. Most miraculously, Mr. Kearsley himself escaped. He adroitly managed to alight from his horse over his hind-quarters, and succeeded to obtaining a side footing one single instance before the animal fell and was dashed to pieces.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 30th October 1858

Page 2 Col. 2

A Girl Rolled to Death.

A few days ago a young girl, not more than 14 years of age, named Thomas, met with a fearful, but instantaneous death, at the Cyfarthfa Ironworks, in South Wales, where she was employed. In the course of her work her clothes caught fire, and with her burning dress she ran to the rolls, where there is always running water, in order to put out the flames. In doing so, however, her dress was unfortunately caught by the spindles, and in an instant the poor creature was dragged between the revolving rollers, a literally crushed to pieces. Of course death was instantaneous, the dreadful affair being but momentary, the fragments of her body were gathered together, and an inquest held over them, the customary verdict being returned.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 30th October 1858

Page 2 Col. 4

Staveley Collieries.

The Hollingwood New Shaft was sunk to the coal on Saturday last, which proved of excellent quality, being 6 feet thick of good coal, at a depth of 217 yards from surface. This pit has gone down most expeditiously, having been only ten months in progress without any serious accident. The pit will find employment to 200 extra colliers, and will be ready for coal work in a few weeks.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 30th October 1858

Page 2 Col. 5

County Court, Chesterfield.

George Bellamy v. Henry Hibbert.

A claim, £6-7-10d. It appears that both parties, who live at Unstone, took a pit as partners from Mr. Rangeley, which was in a bad state. Under the agreement they were to make the best of it. Shortly after defendant left and went to another pit, and left about £5 due for wages to the men. Plaintiff was summoned before the magistrates, and ordered to pay, and he now sought to recover half the amount of defendant, who was his partner. The other part of the claim was for tools, etc., which were in the pit. Defendant alleged that he wanted to take the pit out of plaintiff's hands and work it himself, but he refused him. He thought there was as much money in hand as would pay all claims against them.

His Honour said that defendant ought to pay half, and that he ought likewise to have been summoned before the magistrates when plaintiff was. Verdict for the plaintiff, with costs.

Derbyshire Times

Saturday 30th October 1858

Page 4 Col. 4

Colliers Strike.

The collieries in the Adwalton district have been supplying Leeds and the neighbourhood with coal since the suspension of the collieries in the Leeds, Wakefield and Methley district. The men, finding that their masters had advanced coal 1-0d. per ton, claimed to have their wages advanced 5 percent. This demand not having been conceded, the miners engaged at seven or eight collieries, in number about 500 men and boys, determined to "strike".