

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 6th. April 1861.

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Advert - Lockoford Colliery.

Best Dunstone Coal delivered in Chesterfield at 7-0d. per ton.

Jos. Lambert and Co., proprietors.

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Letter - No Headline.

Sir,

Will you allow me through the columns of your valuable paper to call the attention of the miners of this district to what the proprietors of the several mines or collieries about Chesterfield are about trying to adopt, which is a disgraceful system to miners, namely, putting on 11 hours instead of 9½ hours. I appeal to the miners to ask them whether such a system is reasonable? Is it possible for a man to go to work, say begin at 6 a.m. till 5 p.m., going at it pell-mell, which he has to do now for a mere sustenance? I am sure, that if such a system comes to pass, either the proprietors or the contractors, or both, must suffer, and severely, for it is impossible to be working all the while, as, if the men are in the pit so many hours, they cannot be there without burning candles. Should such a disgraceful and unreasonable system be allowed, the curse of our children and the children's children will be upon us for submitting to it.

Apologising for trespassing thus much upon your valuable space,

I am, &
A MINER.

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No Headline.

John Gee summoned John Berresford for 12-0d., which, he alleged, was due to him for wages. The defendant, it appeared, was a resident of Chesterfield, and a contractor, and he engaged complainant to work in a pit at Wingerworth, on the 20th. of February, at 4-0d. per day. He had paid complainant various sums at this stated ratio until, a short time ago, he appeared as a witness for John Mosley in a similar case, for which defendant said he "would make him remember". The amount was ordered to be paid, with £1-0-6d. costs, or a distress to be issued.

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No Headline.

William Carr, jun., agent to W. Fowler, Esq., of the Dunston and Barlow Company, charged John Wright, William Dodd, and Benjamin Lomas with absenting themselves from the service of the above Company without notice. It was given in evidence that the men had all signed the rules of the colliery, but did not commence work, but this the Bench thought was not sufficiently binding, and ordered the defendants to be discharged.

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No Headline.

Benjamin Stock, of South Normanton, collier, was brought up on a warrant, charged by Mr. North, colliery agent at the Carnfield Pits, with being absent from his work. Ordered to return to work, and pay costs, 13-6d.

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Colliers' Strike at Wingerworth.

The colliers employed under the Wingerworth Iron Company yesterday (Friday) issued the following placard: -

"To the Miners of Chesterfield and the Neighbourhood

The colliers employed at the Speight Hill Pits, belonging to the Wingerworth Iron Company, are on strike in consequence of the tyrannical oppression of the masters, who want them to work 11 hours, instead of 9½ as hereto.

A meeting will be held in the Market Place, Chesterfield, on Monday morning, at 11 o'clock, and the attendance of the colliers and miners of Chesterfield and neighbourhood is respectfully solicited."

We hear that the ironmasters around Chesterfield intend working their pits 55 instead of 48 hours per week, and the men whose notices expired on April the 11th. have refused to work until the completion of other notices, terminating on the 13th. of April.

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The Iron and Coal Trades of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. - Apr. 4.

The iron trade still continues languid, but there are no indications that the depression has increased. The ironmasters, at their preliminary meeting, have declared their adherence to the old scale of prices, we hear that this course was the most judicious under the circumstances. The accounts brought from the states by the last mails are a little more encouraging, but the effect of the Tariff Bill will prove, as was anticipated, very prejudicial to our British ironmasters. The metal trades of Sheffield are unusually depressed, owing to this Bill, coupled with the high rate of interest charged by the banks. The demand for ship plates is very active, and a large number of orders have been received from government and large shipbuilding firms. There is also a good enquiry for rails, railway wheels, and axles, at Rotherham, and in two other districts of Yorkshire. It is estimated that there are nearly 30,000 weavers out on strike in Lancashire, which is producing great depression in other departments of trade in the county. We have to report a steady and increasing demand for coal, particularly the hard kinds, which are used for steam purposes. The substitution of this material for coke has given a great impetus to the demand from the different railway companies, and much is also required for shipping. Indeed, the demand more than doubles the production. The South Yorkshire and Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire companies are now carrying a large quantity of minerals over their lines, which is proving already the wisdom of the two companies in amalgamating; as they now have direct access to the great coalfield of South Yorkshire they are carrying immense quantities to the market which were hitherto inactively supplied.

Mining Journal.

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Leader - The Colliers' Strike.

Strikes are bad always. They are accompanied by a train of most unhappy circumstances. Poverty, misery, wretchedness in a thousand forms, are constant attenders upon strikes. The toiler is invariably the greatest sufferer. Wives and children feel the keenest ills of these trade disputes. We would it were otherwise, for it is grievous to witness the innumerable miseries which strikes create amongst those who least of all should suffer. Poor women, innocent, harmless children: it is hard that they should be the greatest sufferers. But they drain the bitter cup of the dregs nevertheless. Upon this, if on no other account, it behoves men to be cautious how they give up the bread of life even for a principle. Upon this account, also, employers of labour should have a care how they provoke the employed to rebel. Both have great responsibilities. Both should be actuated by an amicable desire to promote the interest of each other. Both should consult the fair and legitimate interest of the other. "The labourer is worthy of his hire". The labourer should have due consideration, for capital is useless without his aid. We fear that these first principles are not sufficiently regarded, or else we should not have to lament to continual conflicts between capital and labour.

The strike in our own locality, concerning which we have full reports in another part of our paper, is much to be regretted. But we are bound to confess that the men have arguments on their side, to say the least, as strong as those of the masters. The men put forward what seems to be a reasonable excuse for what they have done - if there can be a reason for a strike. Nothing should be left undone in the way of an amicable adjustment of differences, before men proceed to the last alternative of a strike. It does not follow that when a master says, "I cannot afford to give you so much wages as I have paid you formerly", that men are to strike work immediately. They will protest against the change, as they have an undoubted right to do, and work under protest, endeavouring, in the meantime, to come to a settlement of the question in dispute by arbitration or otherwise. The master has a perfect right to reduce the pay of an employee, and the latter has a perfect right to refuse the new rate of wages. at the same time it is questionable whether it is not wise to work at the lower rate whilst efforts to resist it are being made.

This once more brings up the question of Arbitration Courts for the settlement of these disputes. France has such national courts, and they would be highly beneficial to this country. We want a court where master and man can lay their grievances before fair and unbiased judges, and have them properly discussed and arranged. We lack this middle course of procedure, and have nothing left but the application of force against force. The contending powers are capital and labour, and in 9 cases out of 10 the latter is the loser. It is to be hoped that some member of Parliament will bring this important matter prominently before the legislature. Our North Derbyshire members do not appear to be setting the Thames on fire. They are on the right side of the House, nevertheless, and could not take up a more important question than this of Trade Dispute Arbitration Courts.

We sincerely trust that our local colliers strike will be speedily settled. The colliers work is fraught with greater personal risk and danger, and is hard weary toil. He deserves consideration, and we would recommend the masters to deal liberally by him. At the same time we will counsel the collier to be calm, moderate, and lenient in his demands. Much depends upon the way in which the collier conducts himself as to how the struggle may terminate. Both sides have duties

to perform, and we trust, to the credit of labour, that nothing like violence or illiberality will mark the doings of the workmen. We have a sincere and deep interest in the man who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow, and we warn him, as a friend, against indulging in anything like passionate demonstrations. To both employer and employed we say bring the dispute to an end as soon as possible - lose no opportunity of settling a quarrel which is injurious to labour and a check upon a legitimate and useful employment of capital.

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No Headline.

Although Derbyshire will not have to boast of a Paxton as the designer of the Great Exhibition of 1862, this county will have the honour of executing the contract for the ironwork of that building, Mr. Barrow having received the contract, which is said to amount to £60,000. No doubt the immense resources of the Staveley Works will be brought into requisition, and we have no doubt that the work will be creditably executed. Whilst alluding to Staveley, we may just mention that Mr. Barrow, the proprietor of the works, is about to equip the company of artillery volunteers, besides presenting the intended band of the corps with a complete set of brass instruments.

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Strike of Coal and Ironstone Miners.

Large Meeting at Chesterfield.

A public meeting of coal and ironstone miners was held at the Market Place, Chesterfield, on Monday morning last, at eleven o'clock, for the purpose of taking into consideration what proceedings should be taken respecting the strike which has lately occurred in consequence of the masters proposing to make the men work eleven hours a day instead of nine and a half. The men on strike belong to the Wingerworth Iron Company, the Glasshouse Colliery, near Eckington; and Messrs. Appleby's. There were nearly 1,000 met to hear the speech, which was to be delivered by a person from Attercliffe, near Sheffield. The speakers took their position on the pump, and Mr. Mannifield, from Attercliffe, was called to the chair. He said he was not come there for the purpose of talking, but he thought somebody else had, and he hoped they would give ear to the man that was talking, and take into consideration what he would talk about. It was no use a man going there unless they had made up their minds to be men one to the other. If they were going to have a union in Chesterfield he hoped they would all support each other.

Mr. Richard Davis, from Attercliffe, then said that the law had a strong arm against such meetings as the present, therefore he hoped they would not over-run each other, but endeavour to be as attentive as possible. They must not cause any riotous proceedings, because if a disturbance was to take place, the law would take effect on such characters as caused it. He believed he had been brought there for the purpose of elucidating the advantages to be derived by the working miner by having a union similar to those in Yorkshire. It was very desirable they should have a union in Chesterfield. There were branches connected with it that endeavoured to preserve the health of the miner. During the past year £100 had been saved in Yorkshire to go towards the relief of the distressed - it had saved the ratepayers that amount in taxation. Before a union was commenced, if a man fell into distressed circumstances, he had to resort to the parish; but now the union was in such a position as to support their fellow workmen. Such a society was calculated to save the town an enormous expense - it provided for them in the time of strikes. He would endeavour to show them the system that was carried on in Barnsley. The amount of money they had realised was £4,500, which was accounted for by each man paying 6d. a week contributions. That fund now supported a man from any unjust proceeding, such as wanting to tax a man with extra labour. It supported men in asking for a just recompense for their work. If a master considered the interests of himself and his men, he thought they would soon learn better than to under-pay a working man. They would pay their workman for the labour produced. The speaker here quoted several passages of scripture bearing on his argument. He hoped if there was any person present who was oppressing the working man, and endeavouring to stay him from having his fair amount of remuneration, he would take into consideration the remarks contained in the Bible, and sympathise with a working man's just claims. After other remarks of a similar nature, he referred to the taxation on weight made by the masters. The true English weight was 20 cwt. to the ton, but the masters demanded from the collier 30 cwt. to 34 cwt. to the ton. He would just show them in this case what benefit a union had been. In Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire, they had petitioned the Legislature to protect the colliers in the weighing of their coal. He then read a clause from the Act of Parliament passed in 1860, which gave the collier power to appoint a man to see the mineral weighed on their behalf. The collier had been robbed in the weight of their coal; but now they could station a person to see justice done between man and man - the workmen and their employers. That was

the law passed in the present parliament - it was the same in Chesterfield as in Yorkshire. It was for them to say whether they would be thus robbed in the weight of their coal - or would they pay a man wages to see justice done between them and their employers. If the employers dared to interrupt them, they could by law claim it as a right. He was glad to see Parliament taking a part in the matter with the view of protecting the working man, and he hoped that, as Barnsley had succeeded and proved that by being united they could demand their rights, the friends of Chesterfield and neighbourhood would begin to think and study for themselves. He was sure if they were organised together it would be impossible for them to be overpowered by any such tyrannical proceedings, If men would leave off thinking so much of self - come out with principle - for they said "union is strength" - they would be differently treated. (Cheers). That was what they would have to do before they could claim what they wanted. From a bill that had been handed to him, he found the men employed at Speight Hill Colliery had been in the habit of working 9½ hours a day, and now the masters wanted to take another step in adding to that by demanding extra hours of labour. They wanted the men to work eleven hours a day instead of nine and a half. He wished to know if the workmen were going to receive any difference in wages for that extra time. They would get extra coal and ironstone, and surely they ought to receive extra pay. But he was informed they were to have no extra pay. Now he considered they did not ought to work extra hours without extra pay, and therefore, friends, if they wanted to gain this they would have to (as he said before) organise together. In different collieries in Yorkshire the men now gave over at two o'clock in the day, after having worked eight hours instead of twelve, as they used to do; but then they had no machine man of their own. Now they had a man to look at the machine and see the stuff properly weighed, and they could earn as much in the eight hours as they used to do in twelve. (Hear, hear). They used to have to send up 34 cwt. to the ton, but now they had a just weight - 20 cwt. to the ton. (Cheers). Miners could by such work begin to improve themselves. They were considered the most ignorant class in the kingdom by some; but they could by that short time begin to study - they had time to act and think for themselves. They might now, by their own perseverance, be rescued from the bondage of slavery. They ought to think about the future instead of indulging at the card table or the domino board. They ought to be learned so that they could petition the Legislature for a further improvement still. Unless they thought for themselves, it was impossible for their masters to think for them. They would, more likely, lead them in the dark, and then blow out the light which was in their favour. They would find if they started the Union it would have the effect of keeping them more sober, and the masters would ultimately succumb. They would see the improvement it made in the men, and would then support them. He knew a little anecdote about a man who was employed at the Brightside Colliery. He said he would not pay to a Union cause, and the master knew that Union men were the only persons he could depend on, and he said, "Unless you pay there is no work here for you" (Cheers). It would be the same in Chesterfield and neighbourhood. If the masters saw the men organised together in such a way as not to be set asunder, and did not advocate strikes, if it was possible to avoid them, they would sanction such a society. If it was well conducted, they would say that the Union was a good cause. They had had to work for a many years under the yoke of bondage, but it had now broken. They were beginning to learn something, and he hoped it would help them in carrying out a system of organisation.

S person here handed a letter to the Chairman, stating that Mr. Appleby was not aware that his men were going on strike.

The Chairman said there was no reason in a man working eleven hours - they ought only to work eight. It was enough for them to work extra when the market was low, but not when the market was full. The masters knew the market was full, and yet they wanted the men to get still more coal, to make the market more full. At a time like the present they ought to work all the less, and let the market get empty. He continued at great length to illustrate the rise and fall of the market, and concluded by saying if masters would study the men instead of trying to run

each other down in price, it would be far better for England. If they run the price of coal down they did not lose by it themselves, but wanted to reduce the wages of the men. He could tell them that if the masters could not keep themselves right, it was high time the men did it for them. (Laughter and Cheers).

Mr. Davies continued: He said it appeared the Wingerworth Company wanted their men to work an hour and a half longer, and they had done quite right in opposing it. If the masters wanted to take proceedings against them, he could say they could not, for if a master demanded a man to work longer than his proper time, it was his duty to strike momentarily against it. Has the master got the Government rules hung up in his office? - if he had not he was liable to a fine of £50, and would to God it was £50,000. (Loud Cheers).

The chairman then rose, and said he hoped the men would stand out against such unjust proceedings; he hoped they would stand staunch, and he was sure the people of Chesterfield would sympathise with them. They would never perish. If the masters were determined to stick to their rise, he would say let them have the pleasure of working themselves, and then perhaps they would be better able to sympathise with the men - (Cheers) - that had been employed under them. He hoped they would stick to each other, or else what would be the next proceeding - a reduction of wages. He hoped their brother miners in work would assist them, and he would promise them some money from the union to assist them. They would never starve, he was sure. (Cheers).

Mr. Davis then said he would put them in a way to start an union in conjunction with Yorkshire. He would wait until 3.30, when he had to leave them to attend another meeting that evening.

A strong discussion here took place between Mr. Daniel Cooke and the Chairman, which resulted in the former gentleman telling the Chairman that if he was to be corrected it must be by a wise man and not a fool. (Loud Laughter).

The speaker and a great number of colliers and miners then repaired to the Three Tuns Inn to form a union, and this brought the meeting to a close.

A large number of workmen sauntered about the Market Place for the remainder of the day.

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Caution to Miners - Johnson, Lucas, and Co. v. Parkin

The plaintiffs are coalmasters at Dronfield and the defendant was a collier formerly in their employ. The action was brought to recover £1-4-11d., the value of some tools supplied by plaintiffs to the defendant, and punches which, contrary to the rules of the colliery, he had "gobbed" (buried) negligently.

Evidence was given by Mr. Carr and the banksman that tools had been supplied to the defendant by them, and that instead of taking out the punches in the pit, he had buried them to save himself the trouble of getting them out.

The defendant contended that the punches were buried by a fellow workman, named Amos Cooper, to whom they were served, and he had paid for what tools had been supplied to him.

His Honour struck out several items, and gave judgement for 8-10d.

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No Headline.

William Anthony summoned John Gornelly for 9-6d., which he alleged was due to him for work done in a pit at Wingerworth. Complainant asserted that he had paid defendant all that was due to him up to the time he was in possession of the pit, and at the same time intimated to the defendant that he (complainant) was finished with the pit, that he might work forward with his successor if he thought proper. This evidence was clearly proved by the person who took possession of the pit, and the case was discharged.

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 27th. April 1861.

Page 2 Col. 2.

Advert - To be Let,

the sinking of two shafts. - Apply at the office, Tapton New Colliery, Newbold Road.

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Erratum.

In a case reported in our County Court news last week, "Johnson, Lucas, and Co., v. Parkin", read "v. Bennett". The defendant was sued for 14-8d. for tools supplied by the Company and not 24-11d. as stated in our last. The Judge did not strike any items off, it appears that defendant had paid 3-0d., which plaintiffs had not accounted for, and it was allowed by His Honour.

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Page 3 Col. 1.

The Miners' Strike.

We hear that the dispute between the ironmasters and their men is now arranged - most of those in the service of the Wingerworth Iron Company having returned to their work on Monday last, and at other places the same thing may be said in a greater or lesser degree. A wrong impression has prevailed as to the cause of the late unfortunate proceedings; ironstone pits, it seems, are not under Government control or supervision, and the want of proper rules and regulations between contractors and the men employed by them, resulting in a most irregular attendance to their duties, entailing on the proprietors both vexation and pecuniary loss, rendered it necessary at last for the gentlemen alluded to, to adopt more stringent measures for the better and safe working of their pits, and the contractors were given to understand that, as the same price would still be given them per weight for all work done in the extra time, they would be thus enabled to pay the men employed by them a proportionate increase of wages. Some of the contractors admitted the justice of the proposed amendments, but were overborne by the clamour of the many, and, as the town knows, a paid agitator appeared in the Market Place one Monday morning, descant upon their imaginary wrongs, and misrepresent the whole affair. Better counsels, have, however, since prevailed, and the men have resumed work on the masters' terms.

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Pit Accident at Eckington.

On Wednesday last a fatal accident occurred in one of the coal pits belonging to Messrs. Appleby, at Eckington. A married man named Isaac Wardlow was at work, and a quantity of the roof fell upon him, and before the poor fellow could be liberated he had ceased to exist. An inquest was held on the body yesterday (Friday).

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 27th. April 1861.

Page 3 Col. 4.

The Coal and Iron Trades of Yorkshire and Derbyshire. - Apr. 17.

Since our last communication there has been a slight improvement observable in the position and future prospects of the iron trade; a variety of circumstances having tended to give a more healthy aspect to the trade, which may be expected to gradually improve unless some unforeseen event should take place to produce a further impression. The reduction in the bank rate of discount, improvement in the weather, and the receipt of a better supply of orders for home consumption have given a firmer tone to the trade and produced a slight reaction. The strike of operatives in Lancashire is also coming to a close, so that we may shortly anticipate an improved state of trade in the great manufacturing county. The quarterly meetings of the ironmasters, which concluded on Saturday, afforded evidence of a more buoyant trade; and though the improvement was only moderate, it will tend to maintain prices, and prevent, to a certain extent, the prevalence of underselling, which during the last quarter has been much complained of. There is an improved enquiry for plates and rails, railway springs and wheels, and, indeed, for railway ironworks generally. The success of the experiments lately made at Sheffield for the casting of ship plates is likely to prove a great benefit to the town, as the leading houses in the trade are soliciting orders for the same; and we hear mention that if one firm succeeded in obtaining a large contract which is offered, an entirely new works will be erected for the express manufacture of this description of iron work. The demand for coal has fallen off greatly of late, owing to the depressed condition of the manufacturing trades generally, and the mildness of the weather, which has materially lessened the demand for household consumption. We hear that several of the large colliery works have stocks on the pit banks accumulating to a large extent, owing to a falling off in the demand in the London market. The demand for manufacturing purposes in Lancashire has greatly fallen off, owing to the strike of weavers in Lancashire, which has occasioned stoppage of a large quantity of machinery. Although the weather has been more favourable for lead mining in Derbyshire, we are not enabled to report much progress. The very great depression in the price of the North Derbyshire Mining share causes shareholders in arrears to care little about the payment of calls, and there is a great disposition amongst them to forfeit their shares rather than pay up the calls. It is unquestionably a very great undertaking, and, notwithstanding the depression in the stock, the directors are sanguine of success. The Mill Town Company, near Ashover, have got into better work, and the operations of the last month have shown a net working profit of £35 over the actual expenses. The share market is exceedingly dull, and there is little enquiry for any description of shares.

Mining Journal.