

Derbyshire Times.

Saturday 9th. January 1864.

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Great Demonstration of Lancashire Colliers.

On Friday colliers employed in the mines surrounding St. Helens had a kind of mass meeting to celebrate the advent of another year, and to discuss various questions affecting the interests of their class. The demonstration originated with the executive of the Miners National Association and Provident and Benefit Society - a combination having for its primary object the accumulation of a relief fund wherewith to assist its members in case of their meeting with those accidents to which the miner is constantly liable. Few avocations are more dangerous than those of a miner. In the ten years following 1851 the lives of no fewer than 8,436 were sacrificed throughout the country, and in 1861 the numbers reached the fearful total of 1,109. The accidents every year are to be numbered by thousands, and the more men therefore, the miner stand in the greatest need of a Provident Fund to assist him in the time of his necessity. The movement was set in foot in St. Helens a little more than twelve months ago, and the Society already numbers upwards of 2,000 of the 4,000 miners estimated to reside in the district. A payment of 6d. per week entitled members to a receipt of 9-0d. per week in case of accident, and £5 upon the death of either husband or wife. One object of the demonstration was to notice, and it was doubtless, also, designed with a view of practically showing to the masters the extent of the power of the combination in existence among the miners. The latter have just received an increase of ten percent, upon their wages, but they still seek remedy for two or three alleged grievances. In the first place, they complain of the present delay in the payment of wages. In most of the collieries it is the custom to pay the men only once in three weeks, and sometimes a month, and even five weeks are allowed to elapse between one payday and another. The miners, and more especially miners wives, complain that they are often put to great straits in consequences, and ask to be paid once a week, or at least once a fortnight; while on the other hand, it is alleged that it would be disadvantageous to the men themselves to pay them more frequently owing to a custom into which they have taken of keeping a holiday for a day or two whenever they receive their earnings. Another moot point is in reference to the hours of labour, the men wishing to have the day reduced from ten to eight hours, and a further grievance is the payment of coal by measure instead of by weight. Several gentlemen also addressed the assembly, and at the close the following resolutions were moved and seconded by colliers in the crowd, and all of them carried unanimously - First, weekly pay; Second, coal sent by weight; Third, restriction of the hours of labour; Fourth, we all become Society men?

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Advert - Owl Cotes Colliery, Heath.

Hard Coals	6-8d. per Ton,	2-6d. Leading
Soft Coals	5-0d. per Ton.	2-6d. Leading

(Cash)

J. Brockmer, Eyre Street, and Mill Street, Spa Lane.  
Agents in Chesterfield.

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Advert - Hasland Lane Colliery.

Knowles and Company are now selling for cash at the pits

Main Coal	5-7d. per ton.
Cobbles	4-9d. per ton.
Slack	2-6d. per ton.

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Toll Bar Free

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Newbold - Messrs. Lancaster's Treat to their Workmen.

On New Years Day, the colliers and labourers in the employ of Messrs. S. and W. Lancaster, to the number of thirty six, sat down to a splendid dinner in the house of Mr. Heath, the Goldminers Arms, Little Moor, the Messrs. Lancasters occupying both ends of the table. After the cloth was drawn the evening was spent in a very agreeable manner. On Monday last, the wives and sweethearts belonging to the same party, to the number of thirty seven, had an excellent tea at the same place, after which dancing commenced and was kept up with great spirit till a late hour.

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Dreadful Accident - Six Men Killed.

A shocking accident took place at Bridgend Colliery, about three miles from Dudley, early on Monday morning. The men employed at the colliery assembled as usual between five and six o'clock on the pit-bank, and the engineer at once proceeded to lower them down the shaft. He had lowered two bands safely, and was in the process of lowering the third when a dreadful catastrophe occurred. The band consisted of six men named Joseph Baker, Job Round, Zechariah Barker, Thomas Bate, John Page and George Terry. Just as the engineer commenced to lower them, a man employed on the pit-bank went to the stable for the purpose of feeding his horse. This animal had got loose during the night, and as soon as the man entered the stable it ran out. In trotting over the pit-bank it lost its footing on some iron plates close to the mouth of the pit, into which it was precipitated, above the men who were being let down. The skip containing the men was then about 40 yards from the surface, and such was the violence with which it was struck by the body of the horse that the chain by which it was attached to the rope was broken through, and the men, horse, and skip hurled to the bottom, a depth from that point of 120 yards. The awful crash, of course, brought the men who had already descended the pit to the spot. There was a fearful scene presented itself to them. The bodies of the men were mangled and lacerated in a manner utterly undecipherable. The heads of all of them were either fractured or smashed to pieces, and several had their arms and legs all but torn off. As soon as possible the remains were gathered together and sent to the top of the pit, where the relatives of the unfortunate men had already assembled to receive them. It is supposed there is anyone to blame for this lamentable occurrence. The chain which broke was sufficient for its purpose, being an inch and a quarter in diameter, It is said, however, that is the patent safety cage and all its appurtenances had been in use in the pit, the probabilities are that the accident would not have happened, insomuch as there would have been a fence round the pit that would have prevented the horse falling down.

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Our London Letter - Bubble Companies.

I fear that before long we shall have some awkward exposures as to the doing in respect of some of our companies. Of late there has been rather a lull in the launching of new companies, but the concoction of schemes has not ceased; but there are in existence many schemes which, as far as my enquiries extend, cannot possibly pay. I will mention no names, but I cannot refrain from mentioning one or two circumstances. A mining company, founded upon a presumed rich mine in Wales, lately issued a prospectus, and great were the promises of the promoters. The flourish of trumpets at the outset and a little rigging of the market sufficed to send the shares up to a premium, but a few months passed away, the shareholders beginning to enquire what has been done. An ugly report is afloat in the financial world that some mining engineers sent down to examine into the probable yield of the mine, have felt compelled to send the directors such a damaging report that the latter have thought proper to berk the report, and the shareholders are put off with vague promises. I hear that in connection with another mine, an old mine with a new company, one of the gentlemen whose names have been put down as directors has repudiated, and expressed surprise at the liberty taken with his patronymic. Another company, which came out very strong at first, and was going to carry all the world before it, is involuntarily winding up, and returning the allotments and calls honourably enough. Apropos of winding. It is to be devoutly wished that the next session will have some improvement of the law on this subject. At present creditors are placed most unmercifully, both in bankruptcy and in chancery, or with auditors, official assignees, trade assignees, brokers, men in profession, lawyers and commissioners, and bankrupt estates are often half swallowed up by perfectly legal but grossly extortionate charges.

The audit of the notorious British Bank in the Bankruptcy Court cost nearly £100,000 out of the £650,000 assets. The equally notorious Bank of Deposit (of Peter Morrison's fraud) has been winding up for years; a certain nobleman who promised £10,000 towards making up the losses has never, I believe, paid the money, and the poor shareholders got nothing. We had a terrible panic some 18 years ago, after a railway mania; I fear we shall soon see a panic after a company mania.

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No Headline.

George Gee, John Varley and Joseph Wilson, were charged with leaving the services of the Wingerworth Coal Company. Ordered to return to work and pay costs.

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Inquests - Explosion of Gunpowder in a Coal Mine.

On Monday last, the 18th. inst., an Inquest was held at the George Inn, Alfreton, on the body of John Dawes, coalminer, aged 38 years, who died on the 16th. inst., from injuries received at Mr. Morewood's Swanwick Colliery, on the 28th. of December, from an explosion of gunpowder, with which the deceased was blasting stone. The Jury returned a Verdict of "Accidental Death".

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Inquests - Sheepbridge - Fatal Accident.

On Wednesday an Inquest was held at the Chesterfield Hospital on the body of a youth named John Layton, who died on Monday night. It appeared that he had been employed on the Sheepbridge Works, and on Saturday evening was standing on the top of the grate bars of the ironstone washing machine, pushing down the ore, when his foot slipped between, and being caught by the rollers was frightfully mutilated. He was immediately conveyed to the Chesterfield Hospital, where on Sunday morning, the leg was amputated. The youth had been previously cautioned by the engineman not to play such tricks, but to attend to his duty that of feeding the rollers. The case was a hopeless one from the first period of his admission. Verdict - "Accidental Death".

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Inquests.

On Monday, the 18th inst., an Inquest was held at the New Inn, Whittington Moor, on the body of James Cook, of Whittington, joiner and carpenter, aged 63 years, who was found dead on an incline at the Sheepbridge Works, on Saturday morning, dreadfully mangled. William Bacon, plate layer at the Sheepbridge Works, said that on Saturday morning at 7 o'clock, he was at his toolbox, between the main road and the incline, about 20 yards from the place of accident, and deceased came up to him along the footpath, and he would have to cross the incline to get to his work. He wished deceased "Good Morning", and deceased said "Good Morning". Witness said "Its very dark", and deceased said "It is". The engine had left the yard and gone down the main road to get a start to back up the incline just before deceased spoke to him. Nearly 10 minutes elapsed before the engine backed up the incline, and he (witness) thought that deceased would have had time to get to his place of work and back again to the incline before the engine backed up. His body was found about twenty yards from the place where he had told witness "Good Morning". Deceased breakfast can was near to him when found. The Jury returned a verdict of "Accidental Death".

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Sudden Slips of Earth.

On Saturday last, a man with a horse and cart was employed in removing a quantity of rubbish in Bedlam Yard, when the sides of the wheel gave way, and the cart sank in the opening up to the axles, and the man had a narrow escape from falling in. By the aid of an extra horse it was dragged from its position. On Friday last, the earth suddenly gave way in Hollis Lane, leaving an opening about 4 feet in diameter and about 8 feet deep. It was first observed by the police, who immediately communicated with the Highways Board, and the place was at once filled up. As it occurred in the night, some serious results might have ensued. No satisfactory reason for the occurrence has been given, but it is supposed to be an old pit.

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Action by the Duke of Devonshire against a Derbyshire Miner.

In the Court of the Queen's Bench, before the Lord Chief Justice and Judges Crompton, Blackburn and Mellor, the appeal case of "The Duke of Devonshire, appellant, and Rawlinson, defendant", was held. It was an appeal against the decision of certain magistrates of Derbyshire refusing to convict the respondent under the Masters and Servants Act, for refusing to comply with his agreement as a workman in one of the mines of the appellant. The Justices had refused to convict, on the ground that the respondent had not been paid wages, and under the contract did not come within the meaning of the statute as servant. Mr. Serjeant Hayes was held in support of the appeal, and, and after hearing counsel for the respondent, the Court were of the opinion that the magistrates were wrong, and upon the facts stated they ought to have convicted, and sent the case back for further consideration.

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Unprotected Mine Shafts.

A correspondent writing to "The Times" respecting the dangers created in many parts of the country by the practice of leaving unfenced shafts or pits which are no longer worked, observes that it may not be generally known "that the law already contains provisions which, if properly applied, would, no doubt, in most cases cure the evils of which they complain. The Act for the Regulation and Inspection of Mines, 23rd. and 24th. of Victoria, cap. 151, in the 10th. section, enacts certain general rules which are to be applicable to all coal and ironstone mines. The fourth of these rules is that " every shaft or pit out of use shall be properly fenced when operations have ceased or been suspended." The 21st. section enacts amongst other things that notice must be given to the Inspector of the District within 2 months of whenever the working of the pit is abandoned, and that " when any mine is abandoned the owner shall cause the same to be, to be kept, securely fenced for the prevention of accidents." Section 22 inflicts a penalty of £20 on mine-owners for every breach of the regulation of this Act, and a further penalty of £1 for every days delay in remedying the infraction after notice from the Inspector. Apparently many of these hideous gulfs date back long before the passing of the Mines Inspection Act, but it does not apply retrospectively to them, surely the mine-owner whose negligence thus endangers the lives of neighbours may be indicted for a nuisance at common law. However this may be, if the Inspector insisted on the Act being carried out they would prevent the multiplication of these frightful risks."

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Derbyshire Mining.

The Iron Trade continues to manifest an improvement, notwithstanding the influences which might be supposed to affect it. The demand for railway iron-work continues to show a largely increasing trade, and if there should be a probability of even a portion of new lines proposed ever becoming a reality, the demand will be materially increased. The coal trade, in consequence of the reasons which we last week stated, is likely to be active for some time to come. The demand of the London and eastern markets are active, are merchants are buying on a much larger scale than it has been known for many past seasons. The rates, too, are well maintained, the only difficulty at some works is to get a supply equal to the demand. This is felt to be the case more especially where large contracts have to be completed and a given supply provided weekly. The colliers, on the whole, are pretty well contented with their position, and the late advance having been given them in many instances without asking has had a great moral effect in inducing a state of contentment at all times most desirable, but not always to be accomplished. There is much talk now of the accomplishment of an object which has long been desired in the coal districts - of a fall in factory employment to the younger female branches of the families of the mining population. In all coal districts, there is a large amount of female labour for which there is no market, and some time ago the question was mooted by one of the proprietors of the Clay Cross Works, Mr. Jackson, J.P., as to the propriety of establishing factories in the mining districts for this purpose, and he recommended that if they were not sufficiently taken up by the individual enterprise, they ought to be worked under the Joint Stock Acts. No practical steps have as yet been taken, but we learn that a company is being formed for that purpose, and a factory will be erected shortly in Staveley. There is much dissatisfaction evinced amongst the shareholders of the Milldam Mine with regard to the last balance sheet, and there will be a continuance of grumblers until a satisfactory explanation be given. The other mines are progressing as satisfactorily as the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed will admit. The Eyam Mine has done a lot of dead work lately; and nothing has occurred to shake the confidence of the shareholders. The Milltown Mine requires fresh capital to test it, and it is not in the hands of a party of speculators, no doubt it will be found. The local stock and share markets have been of a rather fluctuating character during the week. Prince of Wales and Milldam shares have been sought after, as also have those of the Sheffield Gas and Water Companies. The quotations of the other stocks are merely nominal.

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Death from a Fall of Bind.

An Inquest was held at the Chesterfield Hospital on Monday last, on the body of Robert Wain, late of the Foundry Row, Stonegravels, aged 40 years. Deceased had worked at the Staveley Works as a filler for about two years, and whilst so engaged at a calcined heap of ironstone on Saturday morning, which was holed the day previous, but not supported, a quantity fell on his right leg and back, and he received such injuries as to necessitate his removal to hospital. Brandy was now applied, but it failed to revive him, he died shortly after his admittance. The Verdict "Accidental Death".

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Wages Claim.

James Turner sued John Kenderim for the sum of 7-6d. wages due for work done as a miner, at Newbold. Ordered to pay 6-0d. and costs; in default, seven days imprisonment. He went to goal.

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Leaving Service.

William Woodhouse, charged with absenting himself from the services of the West Staveley Colliery Company, was ordered to return to his work and pay 11-0d. costs.

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Mill Dam Mining Company.

The Annual Meeting of the Directors and Shareholders of the above Company was held on Tuesday morning, at the Albion Inn. Johnson, Sheffield. There was a numerous attendance. Mr. Taylor, chairman of the Company presided, and also introduced the business by explaining that the meeting had been purposely deferred until as many of the accounts as possible might been got in. Mr. Fairburn, the Secretary read the following report: -

"Your committee have received on account of arrears of call since the last general meeting the sum of £121, and also received the sum of £2,000 for the creation of 1,000 new shares at £2 per share, as per resolution unanimously passed at the last general meeting. Your committee have raised and sold 391 tons 17 cwt. 3 quarters of ore, which has realised the sum of £4,638-13-2d; these sum together with £70 and £12-13-0d. received as sundry things: makes a total of £6,842-6-2d. In the like period your committee have expended the sum of £7,034-1-0d. which leaves a cash balance against the Company of £191-14-10d. There are also liabilities in the shape of outstanding accounts as will be seen on reference to the balance sheet just sent out, amounting, with the above balance to £1,392-6-10d, which your committee beg to observe embraces every known liability. Sent against this sum there are assets to the amount of £451-5-7d., £431-5-7d. which is shown as assets on the published balance sheet, the remaining £20 being the amount due for arrears of calls. The law-suit between this Company and the Hucklow Mining Company is still pending, but there is every reason to believe that the matter will now speedily be settled, as the arbiter has fixed Thursday, the 28th. instant, to sit and hear the arguments on both sides, previous to making his award. Your committee will again observe that the surface drains that were made at the instance of Mr. Petherick, the arbiter, have answered their purposes admirably, and great credit is due to the arbiter for the decided steps he took in the matter. Your committee have great pleasure in stating that all the machinery is in good working order, and beg particularly to call the attention of the shareholders to the splendid condensing engine which your committee have just erected, and which, no doubt, will be sufficient to drain your Company's mines for years to come."

The report was adopted and the annual meeting fixed for the first Tuesday in February.

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Important to Colliers.

The Edmund's Main Colliery explosion appears likely to have important results as affecting the responsibilities of colliery proprietors. Thirty three actions are being brought by the representative of the persons killed in the mine against the proprietors, on the grounds that the explosion was caused by their negligence. An application was made on Tuesday to change the venue from York to London or Liverpool, and the judges recommended the parties to agree on Liverpool. The results of these actions will be watched with the keenest interest by employers and workmen.