Seven were fatally injured and thirty-three seriously by explosions of gas. This class of accidents are less excusable than a large number caused by falls. The safeguards against explosions are so well known that if they were strictly executed no explosion would take place. Nearly every accident of this class is the direct result of some one's carelessness in disobeying well known regulations. In this class of accidents the innocent frequently suffer through the carelessness of others.

The mine cars are prolific sources of accidents, the most of which might be averted if the boys could be persuaded to exercise more care, but it seems to be an innate desire in a boy to be daring and venturesome, and in his recklessness he is often caught and injured.

The accidents of all classes could be reduced by a more effective discipline, by an effective enforcement of well known rules, and by a stricter regard for the proper qualifications of the persons employed to do the various kinds of work. All this depends on the foremen, and all the foremen have not had the power and natural executive ability to compel obedience to the rules.

Disaster at the Gaylord Colliery.

At about 2.15 A. M., Tuesday, February 13, 1894, an extensive area of the workings of the Gaylord colliery of the Kingston Coal Company at Plymouth, Pa., collapsed, closing the workings in each seam from the Red Ash to the surface, and thirteen workingmen were buried nearly under the centre of the mass. No one escaped, and no one can explain how these thirteen experienced men were so suddenly entrapped.

On Monday morning, February 12th, George Picton discovered a squeeze in the workings of the Ross seam. On examination he suspected that the base and origin of the squeeze was beneath, in the Red Ash seam, and sent his son, Thomas Picton, and another person to make an examination in the old workings of said seam. They went down and found the breasts on the third lift west of Plane cracking and showing a decided indication of a troublesome squeeze. (This point is indicated by the letter C on the accompanying map.) This part of the Red Ash seam workings had been finished and abandoned for seven years and only about eighty car loads of coal remained to be mined in the seam altogether at this time, and that from a place above the head of the plane.

After a consultation, Messrs. Gwilym Edwards, superintendent, and George Picton, general foreman, decided to have a row of props set to support the pillar on the west side of the plane just above the third lift, (At A; see map), and a party of sixteen men were selected and sent for to execute the work. The mine was idle and the men had to be summoned from their homes. Four laborers were there

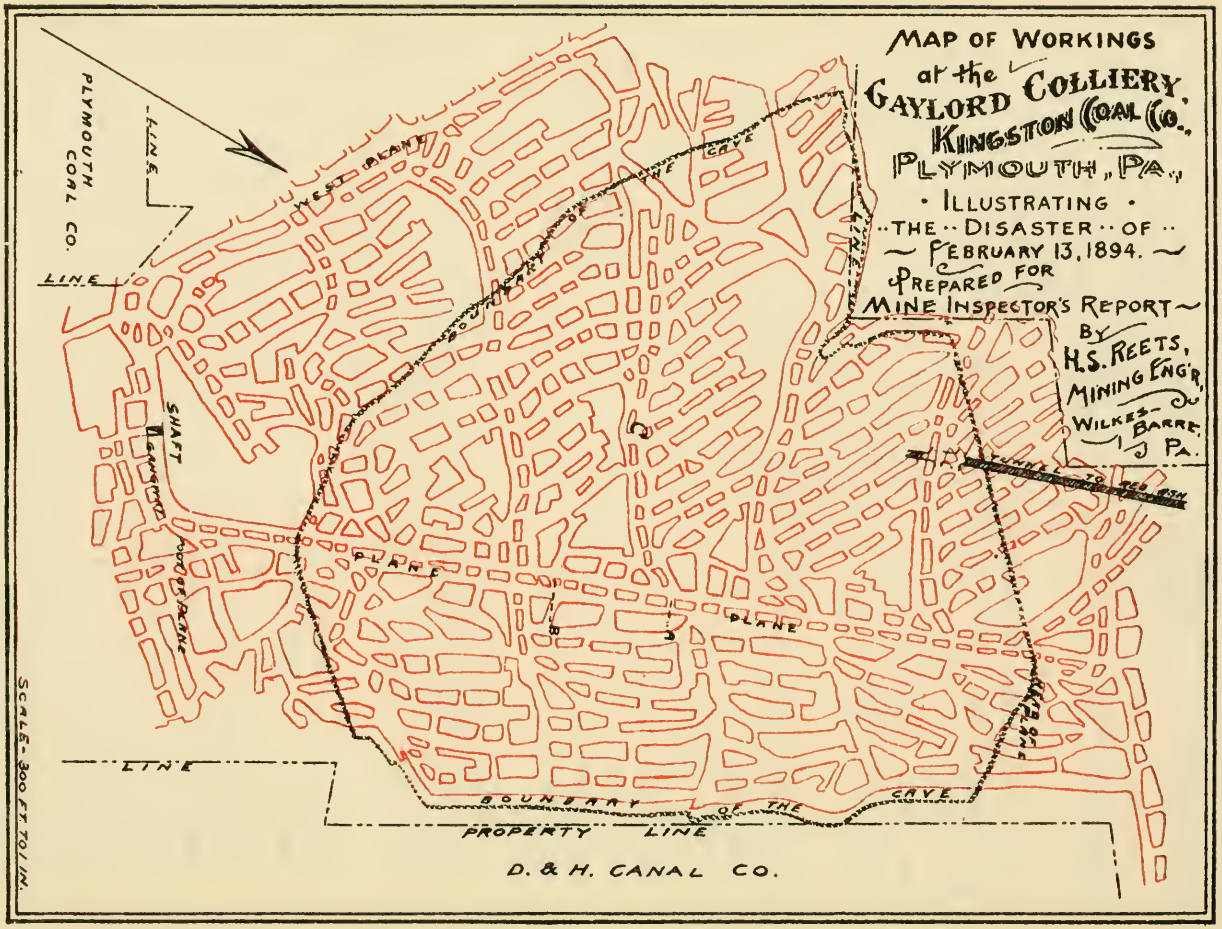
already or came earlier than the others, viz: Henry Williams, Robert Williams, Eli Culver and John Soley. The mine foreman, Thomas Picton, was in charge. He showed these four men the place and told them to clean along the rib to make room for the props. After working there awhile and hearing ominous cracking in the pillars and coal falling in the breasts west of them, they became afraid and decided to leave and go home.

On reaching the foot of the shaft, they met the other party of men coming in with props and tools in charge of Thomas Picton. The latter asked, where they were going, and they answered that they were afraid, and would go home. All right, answered Picton, if you are afraid, you better go. This was shortly after six o'clock P. M. Three men had been left outside to cut props and ten went to work setting the props up.

At 10.30 they were using the timber up, six more of the party went outside to help in getting more props. It was a cold, stormy night, but by fifteen minutes of twelve they had cut the necessary supply and sent them down the shaft. Then they went into the engine house to warm themselves. John D. Jones, the night engineer, asked them if there was much danger there and they replied that there was no danger at all; that the four laborers who went home were unnecessarily alarmed. At about 12.10 they all descended the shaft.

At 1.30 A. M. George Brace, the stable boss, accompanied by Thomas Leyshon, came up the shaft for plank to make cap-pieces. They sent six oak planks eight feet long, one and one-half inches thick down the shaft, and Thomas Leyshon descended the shaft on the same cage, and Brice went home.

At 2.15 A. M., about three-quarters of an hour after Leyshon descended the shaft, the engineer felt a concussion of air, and the speaking tube whistle blew a long, loud whistle. He immediately gave alarm by blowing the steam whistle. George Picton, William Edwards and a number of miners responded in a short time, and went down the shaft and attempted to go up the plane, and succeeded in going up a distance of about 400 feet, where the place was crushing and threatening to close in upon them. They shouted, but heard no reply. Lest the missing men had gone up the plane and were groping in the darkness of the open workings above the plane, parties were sent to enter above from the manway at the outcrop. They, after a search for several hours, came out satisfied that the men were not there. Every open space above and below and around the caved workings was searched without avail. Shouting and tapping brought no response. By noon all hopes of saving the men had vanished and work was promptly commenced to reopen


MAP OF WORKINGS
at the
GAYLORD COLLIERY,
KINGSTON COAL CO.,
PLYMOUTH, PA.,
• ILLUSTRATING •
··THE·· DISASTER ·· OF ··
~ FEBRUARY 13, 1894. ~
PREPARED FOR
MINE INSPECTOR'S REPORT ~
BY
H.S. REETS,
MINING ENG'R,
WILKES-BARRE,
PA.
PLYMOUTH COAL CO.
LINE
LINE
WEST PLANE
BOUNDARY OF THE CAVE
SHAFT
SLANTING DOOR PLANE
PLANE
PLANE
PLANE
LINE
BOUNDARY OF THE CAVE
PROPERTY LINE
D. & H. CANAL CO.
SCALE-300 FT. TO 1 IN.

the plane. It was over 1,600 feet in length, and the thirteen missing men had been working at about the middle of it.

The plane had been operated after Leyshon descended, for the cars of timber attached to the rope at the bottom and the planks he took down had been hoisted up to the point where the men were at work.

George Brace was in the mine with the men till near 1.15 A. M., and he says that all appeared safe when he left. He was at the top of the plane at midnight, and saw no sign of a fall. When coming out he noticed the roof cracking about 100 feet below the men, and he called to Picton and told him. Picton replied, "It is all right; hurry and send us cap-pieces." He and Leyshon went outside and asked the engineer what time it was, and the engineer said it was 1.30 A. M. The planks were taken down and placed on the car and hoisted up to the middle of the plane, and the cave took place at 2.15 A. M. Evidently the plane was clear of all obstruction when it was operated, and this shows that the final crush was sudden and without the usual warning.

The dotted line on map shows the outlines of the caved workings. The men were working at A, and all the bodies were found in the space between A and B. The farthest had not gone more than 240 feet in his flight for life. All were covered by the coal crushed in from the pillars. About 600 feet of the plane had to be reopened to find all the bodies, and then the workings of this seam were abandoned. Work was continued incessantly day and night until all the bodies were found, and each was found as follows:

Peter McLaughlin, on face, head down the plane, March 13, at 1.30 A. M.

Michael Welsh, stooping in a running position, March 14, 4 A. M.

Thomas J. Jones, crushed down on face by a fall of rock, March 15, P. M.

Richard Davies, stooping, in running position, March 16, 10.30 A. M.

James Kingdom, lying on face, head down plane, March 23, 5 A. M.

Thomas Cole, lying on face, head down plane, March 24, 6.30 P. M.

Thomas Leyshon, lying on face, head down plane, March 28, 3.45 P. M.

Thomas Merriman, lying on face, head down plane, March 30, 2.45 P. M.

Joseph Olds, lying on face, head down plane, April 1, 7.45 A. M.

John D. Morris, lying with head down the plane, April 2, 4.30 A. M.

John Hamer, lying with head down the plane, April 2, 10.45 A. M.

Daniel W. Morgan, lying head up the plane, April 5, 10.30 P. M.

Thomas H. Picton, lying across the plane, April 6, 10 A. M.

All were within a short distance of each other in a distance of 200 feet, and all except one, who was under rock, covered by loose coal crushed from the pillars. The mine foreman, Thomas H. Picton, and Daniel W. Morgan had gone only a few feet from the place where they were working, and it is evident from the position that they were found in, that they were in the act of running down the plane when caught.

The Red Ash seam in this section of the mine was twenty feet thick, and although the pillars were large, it is most probable that, during the seven years idleness, enough had scaled off in some of the old breasts to make the pillars too weak to sustain the pressure. It is also probable that the squeeze had been progressing for some time before it was discovered.

An inquest was held on the death of the victims of this disaster by the deputy coroner and a jury of experienced men, and they rendered the following verdict:

"We, the jury, do say that Thos. H. Picton (and the others) came to their death through an error of judgment on their part, or on the part of the person or persons in charge of the party who lost their lives, thereby remaining too long in a place that, as appears to the jury, must have been plainly dangerous for some hours prior to the cave. The cause of the cave is, in our judgment, due to the inefficient size of the pillars left in the Red Ash seam, which were further reduced in size by the chipping of the pillars due to atmospheric causes and to the shocks caused by shots or blasts in the overlying vein. The jury recommend that the next Legislature so amend the present mine laws, if that be possible, so as to prevent miners and laborers from going or being sent into such places as make possible such catastrophies as that under consideration."

JOHN E. PERKINS,
Deputy Coroner.

A. REES,
D. S. DAVIS,
AUSTIN GINLEY,
JOHN E. MALONEY,
REES JONES,
P. B. NEALON,
Jury.