

From the N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.
LIVING BURIAL AND ESCAPE.
For the subjoined graphic account of the remarkable disaster at Carbondale, and the almost miraculous escape of a man who was buried in the crushed mines, we are indebted to the Rev. Mr. Rowland, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in this city. The narrative is equally interesting and extraordinary.

Correspondence of the Commercial Advertiser.
HONESDALE, Jan. 15, 1846.

On Monday morning last, about nine o'clock, an accident occurred in the coal mines of the Delaware and Hudson canal company, at Carbondale, which has produced considerable excitement in the community. A large portion of the hill or mountain into which the mines extend, following the law of gravity, suddenly descended on the honey-comb cavities within its bosom, burying all the unfortunate individuals within its reach. Very many acres descended in a mass; and so great was the pressure of the atmosphere, occasioned by this descent, as to shoot out from the mouth of one of the mines, as from a cannon, a train of cars with a horse and boy, throwing them to a considerable distance. Think of a bellow moved by mountain power, and you will form a very correct idea of the blast. Painful to relate, fifteen individuals were beneath the descending mass, only one of whom has had the good fortune to escape; and his adventures exceed every thing on record. The remaining fourteen are buried alive, if not crushed, and may be now hopelessly wandering in those gloomy caverns, beyond the reach of human aid, and shut out forever, in all probability, from the light of day.

To present a distinct idea of his occurrence, I must first give a brief description of the mines, and the manner of working them.—There are several openings to the coal, which are numbered as 1, 2, 3, 4, &c.; two of them are above the bed of the Lackawanna, and the others are below it. These openings are holes in the side of the hill, about six feet by eight, and are the entrances to the mines. From these mouths are roads leading into the interior of the mountain, following the dip of the coal, sometimes descending. The extent of the mining operations will be perceived from the fact that there are thirty-five miles of railroad laid under ground, in the bosom of the mountain including the main roads with all their ramifications.

The coal lies in a horizontal stratum of from four to six feet in thickness, between strata of slate. The method of mining is, to cut out and remove the coal, leaving only pillars of it to support the hill above, aided by wooden props made of sections of trees, cut of a suitable length. As fast as the coal is removed, the lateral branches of the road are abandoned, and the main avenues pushed on the coal beyond. In this way the coal has been removed for a mile and a half under the mountain, and the roads extend that distance.—About a mile from the mouth of mine No. 1 an air-hole was cut to the surface, up an inclined plane, by which access could be had to the surface of the earth, and down which props were taken. The excavation for coal extends half a mile or more beyond this opening. It was in this vicinity that the accident occurred, and by closing the mouth of his passage cut off all hope of escape to those within, in this direction.

As fast as the coal is removed, no particular care is taken to support the mass above, in the chambers which are abandoned; the props are left to decay that the rock and earth may gradually settle down and fill up these cavities, as it has done in former instances; but care is taken to guard the main avenues to the coal from being thus obstructed.

The coal lies beneath a mass of slate, above the slate is the sand stone rock, and above this are gravel and soil. I have often noticed, in passing through the mines, that many of the ends of the props, which support the slate above, were shivered like a broom, from the vast pressure on them; and I never saw this indication without thinking what might happen, should the mass from above take a motion suddenly to descend, and always breathed easier when I had passed through the mines and emerged to the light of day.

Symptoms of the working of the mass above had been for some time observed and these symptoms had greatly increased for a few days previous to the catastrophe. Every thing was done which could be done in these circumstances to avert danger. No one supposed it possible that the rock above would prove so firm, or that it would settle suddenly or in a mass.

Only a few of the workmen, of whom there are nearly four hundred employed in the mines, had gone in on Monday morning, when Mr. Clarkson, the superintendent, discovered the ominous appearances, and immediately set some hands to work in propping up the slate. On coming out of the mines, about 8 1/2 o'clock, he met Mr. John Hosie, (who is well known at the Croton water works as one of the ablest masons, and who has been in the Hudson and Delaware Canal Co's employment for about a year, preparing himself to take charge of the new mines to be opened below Carbondale,) and told him that he had better wait till he could go with him, and they would examine the mines together.

Mr. Hosie went on, however, into No. 2, intending to join Mr. Clarkson presently, and had proceeded about a mile when, instantly the mountain over his head descended with an awful crash of every thing which opposed its progress, and shot down over him filling up the road with crushed coal and bending him double, leaving not a foot of space between the solid mass above and the crushed coal below. The distance descended was the height of the mine, or from six to eight feet. So great was the pressure of the air that it produced a painful sensation as if some sharp instrument had been thrust into his ears. All was total darkness, every light in the mine being instantly extinguished. Ever and anon the thunder of the falling masses roared through the caverns. After waiting a suitable length of time for the rocks to cease falling, Mr. Hosie began to remove the loose material around him and to creep. He tried one way and it was closed. He then proceeded in the other direction; and after nine hours incessant toil, creeping, removing loose coal and slate, and squeezing himself past obstacles, he made his way into the open mine. Here he tried to strike a light, but his matches had become damp and would not ignite. He then felt around him, and discovered by the direction of the railroad that, instead of making his way out, he had gone farther into the mine, and was cut off from a return by the mass which had settled down upon the road. He then thought him of the air hole, and attempted to reach it; but that passage had been crushed in and closed. Being in the vicinity of the mining operations he found some powder, and spreading it on the floor, endeavored with a pick to ignite it, but could not. He found also a can of oil, which he reserved in case of necessity to use for food.

All was total darkness, and the part of mountain over him was also settling, throwing off huge pieces of slate and exposing him to imminent danger at every step; for but a part of the mass above had come at once, and the other seemed likely to follow. Sensible of his danger Mr. Hosie protected himself as well as he could; he wound up his watch, and felt the time by his hands. He also, with a piece of chalk, wrote in different places his name and the hour when he was at certain points. Being in total darkness, however, he missed his way, but was enabled through his acquaintance with the mines to set himself right. He first tried to reach No. 1, but after toiling to that road, found that it was also crushed in. His only chance seemed then to proceed at right angles with the main arteries of the mines and pass over to No. 3, and this he labored to do in accordance with his best judgment.

At one time he passed through a narrow entrance into a chamber, and in endeavoring to creep out on the other side, he was caught in a narrow place by the hill above settling down upon him, and remained in this position an hour, expecting to die there. But another settling of the mass crushed out some of the materials around him, and he was enabled to free himself and draw back into the chamber of the mine. In returning, however, to the hole by which he had effected his entrance, he found to his dismay that it was closed; and he was compelled to hunt a new passage and finally to dig his way out with his hands.

Thus, after working for more than thirty-six hours, he at length reached No. 3, where he rested, and then when the hill had partially ceased its working, proceeded toward the mouth of the mines. On his way he met Mr. Bryden, one of the superintendents, who, with his men, was exploring the caverns with lights, in search of him; and at about five o'clock in the morning he emerged to the light of day, having been given up as dead, and been crested in utter darkness beneath a settling mountain for forty-eight hours. Mr. Hosie told me many of these particulars, and the others I gleaned from the principal officers of the company, to whom they were narrated.

At one time Mr. Hosie saw lights at a distance, but they soon diminished. They were the lights of men in No. 3, seeking for him. These lights however assured him that he was pursuing the right course. Mr. Hosie's hands were scratched and cut up by working, so as to be completely covered with sores. He never for one moment lost his self-possession, and to this fact, added to his tact and perseverance, is to be ascribed his deliverance.

There were about forty men in the mines when the catastrophe occurred, and the twenty-six who escaped owed their preservation, in a great measure, to Mr. Bryden, one of the superintendents, who conducted them out with great coolness and self-possession, while portions of the hill, other than those which fell first, were settling down around them. Learning that one poor Irish laborer, who had been struck down by the slate, was left, with his leg broken, he went back alone and brought him out. Sometimes he was compelled to creep, and draw the man after him, through crevices which were soon after closed by the settling of the hill. In two hours more the whole had shut down, so that if he had been left his death would have been inevitable. Thanks to Mr. Bryden for his coolness, intrepidity and humanity.

The greatest possible efforts are now made by working night and day to reach the place where the fourteen were at work; but faint hopes, however, are cherished respecting them. The places cannot probably be reached before the middle of next week, if then. The probability is that they have been crushed to death. Most of them were men with families. One boy only is known with certainty to be dead.

Except for the loss of life, this unforeseen occurrence is not much to be regretted, nor will it greatly impede the company's operations—since it has occurred at about the time when it is usual to suspend labor for a couple of months, to repair for the Spring, and every thing will be rectified before them. The immense strength of the rock above prevented the hill from settling in the usual way; but now it is down, it is to be rejected as, as it frees from future danger, and the roads when reopened will be perfectly secure. It was an innovation for it to come down suddenly in a mass, instead of the quiet decent way it has adopted in former instances, and no human foresight could have predicted the manner of its descent, nor could human prudence, in the present state of knowledge, have provided against it.

The quantity of the mountain fallen is variously estimated. Mr. Bryden said that it was about three quarters of a mile long, by half a mile in width. Mr. Clarkson said that it was about half a mile long and an eighth wide. In the former case it would be about 240 acres, and in the latter 40 acres. Mr. Archibald, the chief superintendent of the mines and rail road, whose science and practical skill are not exceeded, estimates the amount fallen at far less than either of the assistants. Since the first avalanche, it must be borne in mind, however, many other portions have gone down. What the extent of the whole is no one can conjecture with any approximation to certainty; and it is exceedingly difficult at present to get any accurate information respecting it.

I do not know that the company have any interest either to magnify or conceal the matter, inasmuch as it is more likely to prove a benefit than a damage to their future operations. The only expense attending it will be to repair the roads and remove the obstructions; but these will then be safer; and the knowledge acquired by this experience may prove of the greatest utility hereafter.

The occurrence seemed to me so unlike anything I ever heard of, that I commenced writing the account of it to my friends; but it has proved so long, that to save the multiplication of letters, I concluded to send it to your paper, which most of them are accustomed to read; and they may, if they choose, consider it as personally addressed to each of them.—There may be others of your readers also to whom it may not be uninteresting. With sentiments of respect, I am yours,

H. A. ROWLAND.

Improved Mode of Warming Dwellings.
The improvements in the method of warming dwelling-houses, which have been introduced into the City of New-York within the last two years, have effected almost an entire revolution in this department of our domestic arrangements. Mr. E. L. Miller, of Brooklyn, was the first to introduce among us the present admirable system of air-furnaces. He has recently, however, introduced into his own house, 59 Clark-st. an arrangement for warming by air radiated from water-heated surfaces only; in other words, a hot-water furnace of an entirely new construction. The apparatus is placed in the lower basement of the house, occupies no more space than an ordinary hot-air furnace, and distributes the heat through the house in the usual way of the common furnace, but the quantity of fuel under ignition, and the character of the heat, are truly astonishing and delightful. The combustion of the fuel is regulated with the greatest precision by means of a self-acting damper which he has introduced, and which is worked by the expansion of water and air combined, so as to consume any desirable quantity of coal, from 50 to 100 lbs. in the twenty-four hours, according to the state of the weather. The space we saw warmed to the temperature of 68 to 70 degrees, comprises two very large four story houses, 54 feet front by 50 feet deep, containing about thirty rooms. The heat may be carried to any desirable distance, say from one to two hundred feet from the furnace-chamber, and its capacity for heating may be proportioned to buildings of any size, while the peculiar purity and salubrity of the atmosphere, produced by this mode of heating, renders it particularly desirable for dwelling-houses, apartments for the sick, conservatories, &c. &c.

Mr. M. has erected his furnace, not only for the purpose of warming his house, but for exhibiting its operation, which he will be most happy to do to any gentleman who may wish to render his own house more comfortable, in the most efficient and economical manner.—N. Y. Tribune.