

THE LAST COLLIERY ACCIDENT.

Further Particulars of the Pottsville Horror.—Several Men Killed and Fatally Injured.

The Pottsville correspondent of the Philadelphia Bulletin gives the following additional particulars of the shocking colliery accident which occurred there on the 10th inst.:

The scene was the New Philadelphia Gate vein Colliery of HEIN & GLASSMIRE, formerly GAY & HEIN, at New Philadelphia, six miles east of this place. It was about 4 P. M., and the men, who had quit for the day, were being hoisted to the surface by means of the cage, used to raise and lower the coal cars, when suddenly a portion of the hoisting machinery gave way. The ascending cage, which was then about 250 feet from the bottom of the mine, stopped, fell back, stopped again for an instant, and then went rushing down, with its living freight into the black depths from which it had just risen. At the bottom of the shaft is the "sump" or reservoir, which collects the drainage of the mine, containing at this time five or six feet of water, and into this went cage and men, while nearly 400 feet of wire rope was coiled on top of them. The men at the bottom hastened to the relief of their companions, but found themselves almost powerless to aid them. Three were rescued in a dying condition. One, after three or four efforts, succeeded in freeing himself from the superincumbent rope, and at once beset himself to rescue others, but discovered, when he tried to stand, that his left leg was broken, and his right ankle badly sprained. Another, his lips just above the surface of the fast-falling water, called lustily to those about him to help him out or start the pump; but three strong men tried in vain to raise him up, and the pump refused to answer their repeated signals. Ten minutes after another attempt to draw him out of the wreck met with easy success. The drowning men, who had gripped him so firmly before, had relaxed their grasp forever. This man, with a sixth who had also been withdrawn from the sump, crawled, with some assistance, up a steep and difficult "man-way" to the surface; but both sustained severe internal injuries, and this morning the first was reported dead and the second in a dangerous condition. Their names were WM. MATHEWS and PATRICK DAY. The rest of the wounded were obliged to remain in the mine until a new rope could be procured and a temporary apparatus rigged, and it was not until 5 o'clock that they were finally raised to the surface. Three died during the night; the fourth, ALBERT KOCH, had had presence of mind enough, when he felt the cage going down, to grasp an iron bar above his head and draw himself up until the bar was level with his breast. The shock at the bottom loosened his hold, but not until the velocity of his fall was so checked that he escaped with less injuries than any of the others. These men were recovered without difficulty, but there were still six men under the water in the sump, and all efforts to find their bodies were unavailing until the broken machinery was again started and the heavy chain was slowly lifted up. Then the bodies were found after considerable search, and at five o'clock this morning the last one was raised out of the horrible pit, and the weary workers went home to rest. The dead are: JOHN MATHEWS, ELSHA MANUEL, JOHN ROPER, JACOB KLINE, DAVID JONES, JOHN MCDONALD, GEORGE STOUT, JOHN MCANULTY and THOMAS QUIGLEY. WM. MATHEWS was fatally injured, and is now reported dead. The wounded are ALBERT KOCH and PATRICK DAY. The cause of the accident was a defective tooth on the pinion-wheel—a small wheel on the fly-wheel shaft—which geared into the drum-wheel. The rope which raised and lowered the cage was brought up from the shaft, passed over a pulley above the mouth of the shaft, and then wound round a huge cylinder of wood, called the drum, a band of iron teeth encircling one end of which is sometimes called the drum-wheel; but in this case the drum-wheel was a large cog-wheel fitted to the end of the drum.

There was a flaw in the iron of the pinion-wheel, and the tooth which covered it having been weakened by repeated thumps of its big neighbor, gave way at last, carrying two second teeth with it. This caused a slipping of the machinery, and when the broken piece came round again, the jar broke out a segment of the drum-wheel, in which, also, two or three ugly flaws are plainly visible. Somebody's iron was not first quality. When the drum-wheel broke the engine had no longer any control over the machinery, and its movements were now controlled entirely by the big plummet way down there in the shaft, with a dozen men clinging to it, half-way between daylight and death. That the weight was sufficient to exert very rapid action on the part of the machinery, is evident from the appearance of things in that engine-house now. The rope ran off the drum so rapidly that the solid oak planks of which it was built were torn asunder and broken into pieces, iron bars and wooden beams were shattered like pipestems, and the roof and side wall were torn down and flung in indiscriminate chaos among the wreck. Fortunately, the engine was unscathed, and so was the pump-shaft, whose wheel geared into the pinion-wheel on the side opposite to the drum-wheel. The pump was thrown out of gear and the shaft on which the pump-wheel revolved was made to do duty as a drum. By careful management and slow running, the pinion-wheel was made to work, notwithstanding its imperfect condition, and did good service in bringing up the men. If there had been proper grappling irons attached to the cage it would have been held by them and the accident would not have happened. But, you see, none of these things were where they should have been, and so ten men are dead and nobody is to blame. It was a small colliery, and could not be expected to have all these costly contrivances. But there was a hole in the ground, and a deep one—110 yards deep—and a steep one. I have called it a shaft, and so does the mine inspector in his last report; but it is really a slope, pitching 75 deg. 70, then 80 deg.—and men rock up and down this crooked chimney every day, because the "man-way" provided for them was so steep and inconvenient that they would rather risk their lives than use it. It is a dangerous mine in other respects, too. Four men have been burned in it by fire-damp explosions this Summer—one of them fatally.

It looks to an outsider as if the whole establishment was badly in need of reconstruction, but the people in the vicinity, not excepting the family of the sufferers, have no word of blame for the operators, Messrs. HEIN & GLASSMIRE. On the contrary, they express great sympathy for their misfortune, and seem to think they have rather more than their share of "bad luck." It is probable that the colliery, like Avondale, is no worse than many others which have hitherto had better "luck."

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Nov 30, 2025