

NAKED LAMPS IN A MINE

A GAS EXPLOSION IN A COLLIERY.

Many Workmen Terribly Mangled and One Instantly Killed by the Concussion—Several Others Likely to Die—A Mine That Was Considered Safe.

Special Dispatch to THE TIMES.

POTTSVILLE, September 9.

An explosion of sulphur gas at Otto Colliery at half-past one o'clock this morning instantly killed one boy, fatally injured three men and severely burned ten others. The names of the victims are:

JOHN LYNN, driver boy, aged 17 years, instantly killed; THOMAS LYNN, aged 27 years, single, burned very badly about hands and face; ROBERT LYNN, aged 24 years, severely burned about head, breast and arms. These three young men were sons of John Lynn, who was killed by a fall of coal ten years ago. Thomas and Robert are miners and had only started on the work last evening.

JOHN GRAHAM, 30 years of age, wife and two children, miner, seriously burned about body.

JOHN FREW and his sons ALEXANDER and ROBERT, all working on repairs. John and Robert are not badly burned, but Alexander, who has a wife and two children, was thrown by the explosion against the side of the gangway and had several ribs broken, his back injured and his head and body badly burned. His injuries are expected to prove fatal.

JAMES WILSON, burned about the head.

JOE LARKIN, aged 18 years, not fatally burned.

BARNEY MCGAVERS, miner, wife and four children, probably fatally burned.

All the foregoing live at Branchdale. The following live at Forrestville:

CHARLES MACAULEY, 45 years of age, married, very badly burned; not expected to recover.

JAMES LYNCH, married, not serious.

FRANCIS REILLY, aged 30 years, married, not serious.

THE SCENE OF THE DISASTER.

Otto Colliery, the scene of the disaster, is operated by the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company and is located ten miles west of Pottsville. It gives employment to four hundred men and boys. For the last five months but little coal—not over sixty or seventy cars a day—has been shipped, most of the men being employed on repairs and new work, such as driver tunnels. Two of these have been finished and open up a white ash vein which promises big returns for the outlay. The colliery has always been regarded as remarkably free from gas. In the new level an airway has been under way, however, and in this the coal was pretty free run, throwing off large quantities of sulphur. This rose to the upper or red ash level, where the gang of men mentioned were at work.

HOW IT HAPPENED.

A quarter of an hour before the explosion occurred Patrick Kilrain and his son came out of the upper gangway with naked lights and noticed no gas present. At half-past 1 o'clock when the party came out on a truck and John Lynn, the driver, opened the door a cloud of gas burst upon their lights and exploded with a shock that was felt in every part of the mine. Every light was extinguished and the burned and bleeding victims had to grope about in darkness. The elder Lynn boys found the lifeless remains of their little brother some time after the first excitement had subsided, and though the flesh was hanging from their hands and faces groped their way through the black recesses of the mine for nearly a mile before they reached the surface through the second outlet.

The force of the explosion was expended on the three doors in the gangway, passed by the truckload of men coming out. These were brushed away like so many straws. The amount of wreckage, as compared with other explosions of even less force, was not considered great and the damage will be quickly repaired. The gangway at the mouth of which the explosion happened is three hundred and sixty yards below the surface. The Coroner and Mine Inspector will begin an inquest to-morrow. No blame is attached to any one, for the fire boss had been through that part of the mine but a little while before and had there been any gas he would have reported to the men. It is not known at what hour the coal in the lower workings run and forced gas out.