

Coal Mine Explosion—Terrible Loss of Life— Twenty Persons Killed.

On the arrival of the Danville cars, yesterday afternoon, we learned of a terrible explosion and great loss of life at the "English Coal Pits," in Chesterfield County, about fourteen miles from this city, and, in order to become possessed of all the particulars, we at once repaired to the fatal scene.

On arriving at the location of the shaft beneath which the accident had occurred, we saw grouped around it some twenty or thirty men, apparently dumb-founded, laboring earnestly to secure from the depths beneath the remains of their colaborers, friends and acquaintances. From Mr. JOSEPH FOIZEY, the manager, we learned that there were at least twenty white persons in the pit, and that there was very little reason to hope that any of them were alive.

Mr. JOB ATKINS, an experienced miner, and one of the superintendents of the "Midlothian Pits," had come over, and with his usual daring, at once volunteered to descend to ascertain the result of the explosion, and if possible secure any of the miners who might not be dead. Fresh air was immediately pumped in, the pit speedily purified, and Mr. A., with other volunteers, stepped into the bucket and were instantly lowered. They had only been down a short time, when the signal was given, and the bucket, containing the crushed, mangled and lifeless body of MOSES CYRIE, was drawn up. The bucket being again lowered, the signal was repeated, and WM. ELLIOTT was drawn up, dreadfully burned and bruised, but not dead. He was immediately taken to his boarding-house near by, where medical aid was promptly given, but it is greatly feared he cannot recover.

The third body rescued was that of JOS. RIGHTSHAW, an intelligent lad about 14 years of age, whose father was killed by an explosion in the same pit in 1851. His remains were badly burned and charred, but his countenance was as calm and placid as if only asleep. The fourth signal brought the blackened and charred corpse of ROBERT CROSTWICK, a man of family, and a very worthy citizen.

Mr. JOB ATKINS, who had descended the pit, now came up, and reported that there were five or six other dead bodies at the end of the shaft on the first inclined plane, and that further down there were ten or twelve others, all of which were more or less blackened, disfigured and charred by the sad accident. He further stated that the four mules in the pit were all dead; and that there were no hopes of finding any of the miners alive.

The explosion took place about 12½ o'clock, and must have happened just at the time when the miners had ceased their labors, and were eating their dinners. How it originated, it is impossible to tell at this time, though the presumption is, that some of the men thoughtlessly approached some of the "old damps," with their lamps, and that the explosion was caused by the escape of gas from unknown leaks. This pit is 625 feet deep, and explosions have occurred in it two or three times before.

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