

Accidents AND DISASTERS ON LAND,

EXHIBITING MANY USEFUL WARN-
INGS TO AVOID DANGER.

From the experience of others learn caution.



DUNFERMLINE :

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HEATON COLLIERY

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HEATON Colliery lies a mile and a-half east of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and was won about twenty-five years ago. The workings are carried on in the high main coal, from the depth where the engine-pits are sunk to the depth about eighty fathoms, towards the rise, where they may be twenty-five fathoms, covering the seam, but here the present owners have put down no shafts. The inclination of the strata is nearly east and by south.

To the east and north-west of Heaton-hall, are the wastes of ancient collieries, long since abandoned; and the conductors of the mine, well aware of the great body of water they would have to contend with when they approached the boundaries, had increased the number of the steam-engines to three, (one of which is of the power of one hundred and thirty horse,) the whole being capable of drawing 1,200 gallons each minute; and, by this prudent precaution

had already freed themselves from the water pressing upon them from the west; but that accumulated towards the north-west was still to be let off. For this purpose, a drift was driven in a direction to perforate the old workings; near Heaton Burn, a little to the north, and by east of the hall, where the remains of numerous pit-heaps are to be seen. An up-cast dike of eight fathoms had just been passed through: this should have served to point out the spot where the miners of former times were, from necessity, likely to suspend their labours; and now all due precaution should have been used to guard against impending danger.

This drift in the stone had been driven in a sloping direction upwards, to regain the seam, and two feet of coal already formed its roof. At four o'clock on the fatal morning, Mr Miller, the resident or under-viewer, visited the men engaged in this operation; and, a dripping of water from the roof being pointed out to them, he gave directions that the work should be squared up; and said, he would send in the borers at nine o'clock, with the next shift, to ascertain whether the water proceeded from the wastes or no. In less than a quarter of an hour after this conversation took place, the water began to run more freely through the chink, and the two drifters becoming rather alarmed, sent the boy to apprise two other men, who were working near them, of the state of the mine; also directed him to go to the crane, where the cories of coal are delivered from the boardways

into the waggon or roly-way, and acquaint the whole of the men in the pit of the danger. The youth asserts, that no one was at the crane when he reached it: but this is altogether improbable; and no doubt is entertained, that impelled by fear, he made the best of his way to the shaft and escaped. The two workmen first mentioned, had now quitted the face of the drift, and one of them, recollecting that he had left his jacket behind, proposed to the other to return and see how the water was coming off; but at this instant, a frightful crash, accompanied by a violent gust of wind, which extinguished the candles, warned them that an immense torrent of water was rushing into the mine; they fled precipitately towards the working shaft, distant a mile, and, as the water of course flowed first down the lowest level, reached it just in time to save their lives. The two men who were working near them, the boy before-mentioned, and fifteen other men and boys, who were on the roly-way, were so fortunate as make their escape, but not till the last of them was up to his waist in water. Every possibility of retreat to those left behind was now cut off; and, shocking to relate, seventy-five human beings, including Mr. Miller, were shut up in the workings towards the rise of the colliery, either to perish by hunger, or die for want of respirable air; and twenty-four hours elapsed, before the water rose to twenty-five fathoms in the engine pit, if it could even then displace the air confined in the higher part of the mine. Some faint expectations were

entertained during the course of the first day, that a communication might be opened to these unhappy people, by uncovering and descending through one of the old shafts, at Heaton Banks; but, before the scaffolding was reached, the surrounding earth fell in, and every glimpse of hope vanished. Workmen are now busied in clearing out a shaft in front of Heaton-hall, but, owing to rubbish which has accumulated at the bottom, and the carburetted hydrogen which is ascending in great profusion, much time is spent before that part of the workings can be inspected, where most of the pit-men were known to be employed when the accident took place. The sufferers who thus found a living grave, have left twenty-four widows and seventy-seven orphans, besides Mrs Miller and her eight children, to deplore their untimely fate. A subscription was immediately made to relieve the pecuniary distress of their families.

P. S. Thirty-seven horses were in the mine at the catastrophe.

COLLIERY ON FIRE.

Sometime ago it was discovered that a fire existed in the old working of the nine-feet coal at Sauchy Colliery, in the vicinity of Alloa. From the investigation made, it appears that this fire must have been begun about ten years ago,

at the dead crop or out-burst of coal to the surface, where a heap of mire rubbish had been kindled, and from its continuing to burn for many months, had communicated fire to the coal, which was only a few feet from this burning mass. The fire is amongst the rubbish of the old work, and so close to the crop of the coal that the heat has the effect of melting the snow presently on the ground there. The fire is in a state of simple agitation, that is red hot, but no flame, and it is surprising to find how very little progress it has made in the space of ten years. It is very remarkable that no smoke or vapour from the burning mass has appeared at any one of the numerous pits which are upon this nine-foot coal; it is concluded, however, that the great extent of waste or old mines around, condenses the smoke and vapour, which are generated slowly, and in very small quantities. Effectual measures are now in progress to extinguish the fire, which will be easily accomplished, without any loss whatever to the earl of Mansfield, who is the proprietor of the coal field. Very exaggerated accounts are afloat regarding this fire, as if it were like Etna or Vesuvius vomiting flame; but such is its quiet state, that a stranger may walk over the spot where the fire is, and not discern or suspect that such a process is going on below ground.

DISTRESSING ACCIDENT.

A frightful accident occurred some time ago at Lockerby: Mr W. Johnstone, grocer and spirit dealer, had a cask containing about 20lbs. of gun-powder, which, from whatever cause, had become too damp to be saleable, and which he rather incautiously placed behind the counter, within a few feet of the shop fire. To aid, we presume, the drying process, the top of the barrel had been taken off, and its place supplied by one or more sheets of stout brown paper. When candles were required and lighted at dusk, Mr Johnstone's father-in-law, who had been assisting his friends during the hurry of the fair, hastily topped one of them with his fingers, and threw the SNUFF, as he supposed, into the fire. Part of it, however, lighted on the paper that covered the powder, and by EATING THROUGH, to use our informant's own words, occasioned such a fearful explosion as threw the whole town for a time into dismay. Though the walls of the house withstood the shock, every article of merchandise was either destroyed, injured, or displaced; and when the neighbours and owners had leisure to inquire into the cause of the alarm, a scene of ruin and confusion presented itself, such as is rarely witnessed in a country town. Mrs Johnstone and her father were both very dreadfully scorched, and not only was the shop window blown away, but the former carried after it, and thrown with considerable violence on the street.

Even the outer door was riven from its hinges, and transported with such force across the street, that it smashed a window on the opposite side. A brick partition which divides the shop in question, from that occupied by Mr Pagan, draper, was also thrown down, and the goods within, tossed from the shelves, and strewed about the floor, like litter in a stable. In a room above the shop, two individuals were sitting drinking a glass of toddy, and while in the act of interchanging friendly conversation, the grate, as if endowed with the powers of locomotion, suddenly moved from its proper position, and at the same moment one of the interlocutors was pitched to the "far corner of the apartment." The other who is a very heavy man, stuck like a rock to his first position, and it is believed that his superior specific gravity prevented him from being put to any inconvenience. And here we may notice a remarkable circumstance. One of the individuals just alluded to, had his glass in the right hand, and a tea spoon in the left, when he was suddenly removed from his seat at the table; and so astounding was the whole affair, that he still retained these articles after he had escaped from the scene of danger, and had journeyed a good way up the streets of Lockerby. When spoken to on the subject, he appeared like a person awakened from a dream; and altogether, the explosion we have noticed, produced all the effects of an earthquake in the town of Lockerby and its immediate vicinity. Mr Johnston's father-in-law is so severely scorched, that he

cannot see the light of day ; his daughter is in an equally pitiable situation ; and we are grieved to add, that both are considered to be in a precarious, if not in a very dangerous way.

DUEL EXTRAORDINARY.

A very novel species of duel has lately taken place at Paris. M. de Granpree and M. Le Pique having quarrelled about Mademoiselle Tirevit, a celebrated opera dancer, who was kept by the former, but had been discovered in an intrigue with the latter, a challenge ensued. Being both men of elevated mind, they agreed to fight in balloons, and in order to give time for their preparation, it was determined that the duel should take place that day month. Accordingly on the 3rd of May, the parties met at a field adjoining the Thuilleries, where their respective balloons were ready to receive them. Each, attended by a second, ascended his car, loaded with blunderbusses, as pistols could not be expected to be efficient in their probable situations. A great multitude attended, hearing of the balloons, but little dreaming of their purpose : the Parisians merely looked for the novelty of a balloon race. At nine o'clock the cords were cut, and the balloons ascended majestically, amidst the shouts of the spectators. The wind was moderate, blowing from the N. N. W. and

they kept, as far as could be judged, within about 80 yards of each other. When they had mounted to the height of about 900 yards, M. Le Pique fired his piece ineffectually; almost immediately after, the fire was returned by M. Granpree, and penetrated his adversary's balloon; the consequence of which was its rapid descent, and M. Le Pique and his second were both dashed to pieces on a house-top, over which the balloon fell. The victorious Granpree then mounted aloft in the grandest style, and descended safe with his second, about seven leagues from the spot of ascension.

FATAL EFFECTS OF PUTRID MATTER ON THE HUMAN SYSTEM.

A remarkable instance of the fatal effects of the introduction of virulent animal matter into the human system, lately happened in the case of James Gray, a shepherd, then in the service of Mr Archbold of Heton, who, in the act of skinning a sheep which had died of disease (the thorter ill) and which was at the time in a state of putrescence, accidentally cut one of his fingers with the knife he was then using. The consequent effect of the poisonous matter into the wound was truly astonishing; for on his going home in the evening, he complained to his wife

nd family that (to use his own expression) he had inoculated himself, and he already began to feel the bad consequences of it over all that side of his body on which the finger was cut. At five o'clock the next morning, he complained exceedingly, when medical assistance was sent for, but no kind of relief could be given, and with such rapidity did the morbid matter attack his system, that he actually became a corpse, in the highest degree of putridity, by eleven o'clock that day, being less than 24 hours from the introduction of the matter to his dissolution. The above seems worthy of being mentioned as a caution to such as may be employed in the like operation.

SUFFOCATION IN A FERMENTING VAT.

A melancholy accident occurred in a distillery in Belfast. When the fermenting vat was to be cleaned, though the men had been always strictly enjoined to have a large piece taken out on the previous night, and also to put down some burning coals, and afterwards to throw a quantity of water, in order to expel the new air, yet, from mere negligence, one of them without even trying the simple experiment of sending down a lighted candle, rashly descended into the vat, and was suffocated in a moment. His

companions hearing him fall down, one of them hastily went to his assistance, and, though others who were present insisted on his tying a rope round his waist, he, through over anxiety to save his comrade, instantly descended without it, but had scarcely reached the bottom of the ladder with a rope in his hand to fasten to the other man, when he himself was so affected by the air, that he could only give some tremulous shrieks or cries, but being totally unable to help himself, he also fell down. Immediate exertions were then made by all present; and another man having fixed a rope round his waist descended, but before he could lay hold of either of the other two persons, he also was so strongly affected that the people above immediately drew him up again. For some minutes he was strongly convulsed, and appeared like a person deranged; but on being taken to the open air, he immediately recovered. Notwithstanding what he had experienced, his humanity prompted him to make a second attempt, in which he succeeded in throwing a noose over one of the men's legs, and he and that man were both drawn out. Though very much affected, and greatly exhausted by his second attempt: he insisted on going down a third time for the other man; he did so, and in a similar way accomplished his object. Having been rather longer down this third time, when drawn up, he was very seriously affected, but fortunately soon recovered. Medical assistance being immediately called, every exertion was made by two profes-

sional gentlemen to recover the two men who first descended; but though the one had been only fifteen minutes and the other only ten, in the vat, yet every attempt to revive them proved ineffectual.

ACCIDENT FROM GUNPOWDER.

Some time ago a singular occurrence took place with the Edinburgh mail-coach. A gentleman having a gun-case, had persuaded the servants of the coach to place it behind the coachman's seat to prevent its rubbing. They had not proceeded far from Newark, where the passengers dine, when one of the outsides, who sat on the roof, smoking his pipe, the embers fell on the gun-case, which was wrapped in a mat, containing under it three pounds of gunpowder, in separate parcels, one of which exploded, and blew the man from off the roof, and the driver, and another on the box, precipitately into the road. The guard, with praise-worthy exertions, stopped the horses, and proceeded to cut away the gun-case, being told by the passengers there was more powder; when another pound blew up, and, on getting it off to the ground, the third exploded; fortunately no other injury was sustained, than the coachman spraining his ankle, and the guard burning his hand. The rule with mail-coaches is, not to

suffer any luggage on the outside of the coaches; little can be said to a simple gun-case, though, in this instance, it might have proved serious; but the servants of public carriages are very reprehensible in suffering passengers to smoke on the journey. A lamentable circumstance lately occurred, in the like manner, to a baggage-waggon in Hampshire.

DREADFUL EXPLOSION.

A dreadful explosion took place some time ago, attended with the most melancholy consequences. The 2d battalion of the 8th regiment having been relanded a few days since, their baggage and ammunition were placed on Point Beach, where they remained till this morning, when an old woman emptying a pipe which she had been smoking among the baggage, the sparks fell on a barrel of gunpowder, and an instant explosion took place. The effect was most dreadful. About thirty men, women and children, were literally blown to atoms, and the remains of their bodies, limbs, and heads, are strewed in all directions. One poor fellow was blown over the whole of the buildings in Point street; another against the wall of the Union tavern, as high as the garret window; the thigh of the third was blown as far as Broad-street Point. I have seen numbers of legs, arms, &c., taken from the

tops of the houses, and the whole presents a scene shocking beyond description. All the houses below Broad street Point have had their chimneys blown out; and the Star and Garter, and Union, together with every house from the beach upwards, have had the whole of their windows completely demolished. The barrel of powder which exploded stood in a tier with sixteen others, which for several hours were every moment expected to explode, as the smoking fragments were literally strewed over them; but a company of the Worcester militia, with some resolute sailors at their head, ventured to the spot, and cleared the burning fragments from the remaining barrels. Previous to this bold enterprise, which will doubtless be duly rewarded, almost all the families fled in confusion to Portsdown Hill, expecting the whole town to be destroyed by the apprehended explosion; but they have since returned, imploring blessings upon the heads of the brave fellows who saved the town from general destruction. Undergreen's store, the Star and Garter, and Union, were on fire for some time, but not destroyed. Many windows were broken at Gosport, and two ovens were blown down.

LOSS OF LIVES IN A SNOW STORM.

In the storm of January 1809, several persons lost their lives in attempting to return home

from Whitby market. Christopher Swales, a blacksmith in Goatland, about ten miles from Whitby, on his return called upon his son at Sleights, who seeing his father determined to proceed on his journey, undertook to accompany him over the most difficult part of the road. Having travelled a few miles, the old man grew so faint, that his son was under the necessity of taking him upon his back. After encountering their greatest difficulties, they reached the end of their journey, but not before the father had suffered so severely from the cold and fatigue, that he expired almost immediately on entering the house. The son was also reduced to such a state of weakness, by the exertions he had been compelled to make, that his recovery was for some time doubtful. Another sufferer from the severity of the storm was a young woman of the name of Sellers, likewise a resident in Goatland. The most pressing entreaties of her friends at Whitby could not prevail with her to stay the night; her constant reply being that if she did not go home, her mother would conclude that something had happened to her. On the evening of the 18th, she was found sitting upon the snow on the moor, with her horse standing by her, and the bridle in her hand, nearly frozen to death; but on being taken to a farm-house, she soon recovered. She must have been exposed to the severe storm not less than 30 hours. A farmer of Liverton, called Reuben Roger, also returning from Whitby, lost his life near Scalingdam, from the inclemen-

cy of the weather. His body was found a few days afterwards under the snow; the people who discovered him being drawn to the spot by observing a stick placed upright in the snow; which measure it appears, the deceased had adopted as a signal, when exhausted nature had been compelled to resign the hopeless contest. Two men have been found on the moor, near Cock Moor-hall, in the neighbourhood of Scarborough, who had perished in the storm on Saturday, the 17th ult.

AFFECTING OCCURRENCE.

Last week, an inquest was holden at Langham, before John Ellington Jones, Gent., one of the coroners for the county of Rutland, on the bodies of Margaret, John, and Rachael Lowe, the wife and children of John Lowe, a blind beggar, who were accidentally drowned in the brook that runs through Langham pasture. The man and his family were travelling from Cold Overton to Langham, on the preceding evening, and the brook for a moment was swollen to an amazing size. A baker passing with his cart, took them all up—the woman and children into the body of the cart, and the man upon the fore part of it with himself. As soon as they attempted to cross the ford, the cart was carried away by the force of the stream, and turned over.

The woman and children, together with the horse, were drowned: the blind man was saved by his dog, a rope from which was fastened round his wrist. The baker escaped with difficulty. This distressing event occurred before it was dark, but the bodies of the woman and children were not found until the following morning. Upon the body of the elder child, a fine boy, three years old, the usual means of resuscitation were long tried, but without the smallest effect. It is a remarkable circumstance, that the dog, though he has been only three months in the possession of the poor man, has continually pined, and eaten nothing since the fatal accident. He is a young bull-dog.

THUNDER STORM AT AYR.

ON Tuesday afternoon a very sharp storm of thunder and lightning came on here, which lasted upwards of an hour. It was most severely felt in the neighbourhood of Monkton. There its sound and appearance are represented to have been truly terrific. During the storm a vast deluge of rain, mixed with heavy hail, fell out, which washed all the small gravel off the roads in that village; but it did not extend to the Spittal Hill, four miles north-east of it. At the north end of Monkton a very singular phenomenon took place, which was observed by three

men :—A flash of lightning struck a hedge opposite to them, from which they saw an immediate emission of smoke. Where it struck, a quantity of earth had been torn out and scattered about ; but a scraggy tree and the thorns of the hedges were untouched. Within a few yards of this spot stood a stable, where two horses were put up in separate stalls, just at the commencement of the storm. When they were visited after it, they were both dead, and fallen contrary ways ; nor, except a slight appearance of singeing on one of them, was there the least mark of external hurt. The stable is thatched, and above where the horses stood was filled with loose straw : The door was shut, and no appearance of the electric fluid having been in the place could be perceived. The one horse was the property of, and the other hired by Gilbert M'Call, an industrious man, who supported his family by carting, &c., with them.

We understand a subscription has been set on foot to alleviate his loss. The lightning also struck the roof of Underwood House ; tore off the slates, and left the sarking bare the width of a plough-fur ; went down the kitchen vent, passing by a number of children sitting near the fire ; struck the opposite wall, following the direction of the bell-wire ; tore down the lath and plaster ; ascended to the first floor ; drove off the washing-board, and broke one of the steps of the stair.

ACCIDENT OCCASIONED BY A GIG.

A serious accident occurred in this town on the afternoon of Friday last. A fine young animal, the property of Mr Anderson, of Shearington, had been put into a gig for the first time, and was driven a few miles out of town by Mr Johnstone, horse-breaker. On returning to town, the driver called at a house in Assembly-street, to shew a gentleman how very quiet the horse was, and while reining up, the head stool of the bridle unfortunately got so loose, that the bits dropped out of the animal's mouth. On discovering this, Mr Johnstone alighted to put matters to rights, but the horse suddenly lowered his head, and as the bearing rein was fixed, the blinders shifted from his head to his neck, and enabled him to get a view of the vehicle behind, to which he had been harnessed for the first time. This so alarmed him, that he started off, with the driver clinging manfully to his mane, until they reached the Commercial Bank, where Mr Johnstone, by a sudden jerk of the shaft, was pitched to the other side of the street. When fairly unrestrained, the affrighted animal careered along Irish street with the greatest fury, and at length his head came so violently in contact with the iron railing in front of the corner shop, immediately under the County Tax Office, that he was killed in one moment, and dropped down as motionless as if he had been struck by lightning. A number of persons witnessed the accident, and it is a great mercy that no farther mischief ensued.

ACCIDENT FROM MACHINERY.

A most distressing accident occurred at Morton-mains on Friday last. On the afternoon of that day, a respectable young man was employed in feeding the thrashing-mill, when thinking that the grain was going in too thick, and that it might tend to choke the machinery, he incautiously put in his left hand with a view of withdrawing the superfluous straw. In doing this, the rollers unfortunately caught hold of his arm, and drew it in up to the shoulder.—Had he proclaimed his danger by calling for assistance, the machinery could have been stopped in one moment; but some time elapsed before his perilous situation was known, and even after the mill had ceased to move, nearly half an hour elapsed before the machinery could be turned and cut so as to leave a passage for the shattered member. Three medical gentlemen arrived at Morton-mains within one hour from the time the accident occurred, and after a patient and painful investigation, amputation was deemed indispensably necessary. The operation was borne with wonderful fortitude, and notwithstanding all he had gone through, the sufferer obtained a little sleep through the night, and to all appearance was apparently so easy on the following morning, that hopes are entertained of his ultimate recovery.

ATTEMPT OF AN EAGLE TO DEVOUR A BOY

A very singular occurrence happened some time ago, in the parish of St. Ambrose, about nine miles from this city. Two boys, the one seven and the other five years old, amused themselves in an adjoining field, trying to reap, while their parents were at dinner. A large eagle soon came sailing over them, and with a swoop attempted to seize the eldest, but luckily missed him. The bird, not at all dismayed, sat on the ground at a short distance, and in a few moments repeated the attempt. The bold little fellow defended himself against his fierce antagonist with the sickle he had very fortunately in his hand, and when the bird rushed upon him he struck at it. The sickle entered under the left wing, and the blow having been given strongly went through the liver, and proved instantly fatal. The eagle was afterwards sold to M^r Chasseur, who has stuffed it and placed it in his museum, where it may be seen. It is the ring-tailed or Russian eagle. The wings expand upwards of six feet. Its stomach was opened and found entirely empty. The little boy did not receive a scratch.

NARROW ESCAPE.

Early on the morning of the 1st inst. James Gilmour, carter, Sanquhar, attempted to cross the Nith at the usual ford, while on his way to the coal-pit at Kelloside. During the previous day it had rained heavily; the morning

tes was pitchy dark, and in nearing the ford, he was rather startled by the angry sough of the rolling river. Still, he apprehended no great danger, and urged his horse to enter the water. The animal obeyed, and had hardly waded 5 or 6 yards, when the body of the cart became so bouyant, that it separated and parted company from the wheels and iron-axe—never, perhaps, to be re-united. The horse, too, yielded to the current, and the Carter, while sailing down the stream, had great difficulty in keeping his perilous barge from upsetting. A wooden bridge is thrown across the Nith a little way below where the accident happened, and in floating downwards, poor Gilmour actually passed through the span, steadying the wheelless cart whichever side happened to be highest. At this juncture, the voyage was arrested by a small mass of sand; and on jumping out, the car man was well pleased to find that he was only about half-thigh deep in water. The next care was to save the horse, but on making a spring to regain the halter, he missed his object and was precipitated some feet farther into the stream. As he was now immersed nearly to the waist, he ran the greatest risk of being swept away; but by dint of struggling and personal strength, he very fortunately reached the shore, drenched, breathless, and otherwise exhausted. The burgh of Sanquha lay at the distance of a quarter of a mile, and to it he repaired without delay; obtained the assistance of two friends, prudently furnished himself with a coil of rope, and returned

to the scene of his adventure. The horse by this time had been carried several hundred yards down the Nith, and was found at a place called the "Lady's Chamber," with its head pointing down the river, and the water nearly up to its neck. By means of ropes, thrown by no unpractised hands, both cart and horse were drawn to the side; and the latter, in spite of its previous sufferings, had sufficient strength and mettle, when it came to the push, to ascend a very steep brae, which in all probability, the foot of a similar animal never pressed before.

A DRUNKEN PIG.

A singular occurrence took place some time ago in the parish of Lethnot:—a person fearing a visit from the guagers, concealed an anker of whisky in his pig-sty. The pig, perhaps, conceiving this was the only chance he had of tasting a liquor so much admired by the human species, immediately set about removing the covering, which having accomplished, he abstracted the cork, by the help of the cloth which enveloped it. He drank about a pint of the whisky, which put him into such a flow of spirits, that it was dangerous to approach him. At last the usual effects of enebriety appeared, and down he fell. Milk, oil, &c. &c. was poured down his throat, but in vain;—poor grumpy, like many a one who has degraded himself to the rank of brutality by intoxication, fell a sacrifice to drinking ardent spirits to excess.