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COLLIERY EXPLOSIONS.

THE alarming frequency of colliery explosions of late in various parts of the world, suggests the very great necessity of steps being taken to prevent their recurrence, and to render the life of the collier, while pursuing his vocation, as safe as the lives of men engaged in any other vocation. In Great Britain, France and Belgium these terrible accidents have occurred of late, with unexampled frequency, each one surpassing its predecessor in the horror, distress and suffering attending it.

Colliery explosions in Britain are matters of such common occurrence as to excite no surprise and very little comment; but the loss of life involved in recent accidents seems to so far exceed anything of the kind heard of formerly, that where scores of human beings were once sacrificed, hundreds are losing their lives now.

The oft recurrence of these terrible events almost forces one to the conclusion that the recklessness and disregard for human life, so characteristic of the age, are extending to the management of coal mines; or else that the accidents, with the details of which the public mind is almost constantly appalled, are altogether beyond human control. We fear that the former is to a great extent true.

A colliery explosion has been a comparatively rare occurrence in the United States, but the one which has just occurred in Pennsylvania is of such a terrific nature, involving the destruction of so many lives and such a fearful amount of distress, as to totally eclipse anything of the kind heard of before in this country. Six hundred women and children rendered widows and orphans, almost instantaneously, without the least warning, is an awful thing to reflect upon, and the sight around the mines at the time of the occurrence must have been of the most heart-rending description!

The United States has gone far ahead of all the nations of the world in the utility of its inventions; but with all the skill, science and ingenuity of which our nation can justly boast, nothing has yet been discovered to render the life of the miner safe. Something to test the safety of mines, and to show, as the changes of the weather are indicated by the barometer, the increase of foul air in the underground caverns in which the miner toils, and to mark with precision and certainty the point at which safety can no longer be depended upon, would be of immense utility; and such an invention, by its power to prevent accidents, distress and suffering, and to save life, would justly take rank with the first inventions of the age, and would be worthy of the nation to whom the world is indebted for the steamboat and the electric telegraph.

Or if this be a problem beyond the province of man's ingenuity and skill, can not more stringent laws and regulations than now exist be adopted in relation to mines, so as to ensure, on all occasions, so far as that is within the scope of human power and foresight, a maximum of safety to the underground deliver? It is to be feared that in their greed for gold, those who own and control collieries do not exercise all the means at their command to ensure this; in that reckless competitive spirit, for which the age is so notorious, precautions indispensable to ensure a moderate amount of safety may be overlooked or to some extent disregarded. If such be the case, and there is little reason to doubt it, the necessity for the passage of the most stringent laws to ensure the observance of such precautions, or the appointment of honest, competent, humane men as Government supervisors of mines, is very apparent. If such a class of officers is deemed necessary to test the purity of whisky and other kinds of spirits and wines, by the use of which thousands volunarily destroy

themselves, how much more pressing is that necessity in cases where thousands of lives may be jeopardized through the avarice and culpable neglect of others!

It is very likely that many of the accidents that occur are the result of carelessness and indifference on the part of the miners themselves; for when men are almost continually surrounded by danger they become oblivious of its presence, and neglect the necessary precautions for their own preservation. But such a contingency also involves the necessity of greater watchfulness and more stringent regulations in the management and working of the mines.

This is a subject of the highest importance. The terrible colliery explosions of the past few months furnish all the proof necessary that reform in this direction is as loudly called for as in any other department of human affairs. The invention of an instrument to instantly detect the presence of poisonous air or explosive gases in mines, or to ensure their more thorough and constant ventilation are among the wants of the age. We believe it is within the reach of science and art to solve the problem, and while deploring the dreadful slaughter that has just occurred at Scranton, we hope the cries, tears, distress and sorrow of the hundreds rendered widows and fatherless by the sad event, will be the indirect means of developing the powers of science so that with ordinary precaution all danger of a similar event may be forever obviated.

TRACK-LAYING ON THE UTAH CENTRAL.

JOHN W. YOUNG, Esq., assisted by Bishop E. F. Sheets, is organizing a party of tracklayers with which to commence the business of laying the rails on the Utah Central Railroad. This party when organized will immediately commence operations at Ogden and work this way, and the line will be pushed through as fast as practicable. Chief Engineer, Gen. J. W. Fox, started for Ogden this morning. He and his corps will arrange for the grading of switches and side tracks, necessary to carry on the work. If proper side-tracks should be built, arrangements can doubtless be made with the U. P. R. R. Company to have the rails and other materials needed for building our Line, carried on its cars to the point where they are required, and thereby save the expense and loss of time of unloading and loading again upon the Utah Central Company's cars. We understand that the U. P. R. R. Company are now prepared to commence the delivery of iron, etc., to an agent of the U. C. R. R. and we hope to have it in our power in a few days to state that such delivery has taken place and that the labor of tracklaying has commenced. No effort will now be spared to push the work ahead, and but a few weeks will elapse before we shall hear the whistle of the locomotive in our city. The President, Vice-President, Superintendent, Assistant-Superintendent, Chief Engineer and Directors and other officers of the Road are fully alive to the importance of this work, and they will spare no energy to complete it as quickly as possible.

The prospect of an early completion of this road will be gratifying to all classes of our citizens, and will infuse new life into the grading, the hauling of ties and the other labors connected with the preparation of the road bed for the rails. The work up to the present time, in the language of Assistant-Superintendent Little, has been in the absence of the iron and other materials, if anything, too forward; but now that these materials are likely to be ready for immediate use the work on the Line is not sufficiently forward, and every man who has a job of any kind—grading, furnishing ties, or other timber—should go right at his work and not suffer the job to be detained a single hour on his account. Good, active hands are wanted, and can find good employment on the Line.

THE HUMBOLDT CENTENNIAL.

THE blending of the different nationalities of the world was never carried on to such an extent in any age or country as at the present time in the United States. After the opening up of the British Empire through its invasion and subjugation by the Romans, people from almost every nationality in Europe flocked to and settled in the little Island, and to this amalgamation of different races of people, it has been said that Britain is mainly indebted for her power and greatness

among the nations. But in this country, the opportunities and facilities being so superior, this amalgamation or blending of different races has been carried on to an infinitely greater extent, and it still continues; and for the last few years has been far more extensive than ever before. If such a process has a tendency to improve the race, the American nation will outstrip, physically and intellectually, every nation that has preceded it, and while possessing the excellencies of all, will be distinct from and superior to all. This process will, also, eventually break down nationality and all sectional feelings, render the people of this nation thoroughly cosmopolitan in character, and lead them to hail as brothers, the men of every clime. This tendency in the character of the American people already shows itself in the honor and respect paid, not only to great men born here, and who have achieved fame and renown in their own country, but to the great and good,—the poets, warriors, statesmen, philosophers and philanthropists of every nation. The honor shown to the memory of Shakespeare and Burns, Goethe and Howard, and many others among the illustrious dead springs from this trait in the American character. These men, while they were born in England, Scotland, Germany and other countries, are citizens of the world, and they have lived and labored for humanity the world over; hence the honor and reverence paid to their memories by the American people.

In many cities east, to-morrow, festivals will be held and ceremonies performed in honor of the memory of Baron Von Humboldt, the great German philosopher and traveler. Of all the great men Germany has given to the world, and they are legion in number, none occupy a prouder eminence than Frederic Henry Alexander Baron Von Humboldt, born in Prussia on the 14th of September, 1769. His travels and explorations in the southern portion of the American continent have done more to make known the countries of the mighty Amazon river than any who preceded or have followed him. He was the author of several of the most valuable philosophical and scientific works extant, and his great work, the "Cosmos, or a Physical Description of the Earth," will be read, probably, as long as men dwell on the face of the earth. His discoveries in science—adding considerably to the stock of human knowledge,—justly entitled him to rank amongst the most learned and illustrious men of the world; and because of these he was elected a member of almost every scientific body in the world, and nearly every sovereign reigning at the time of his death had conferred upon him some decoration or mark of honor. Baron Humboldt terminated his mortal career in 1859; but such men, never die, they are imperishable!

It is highly gratifying to know that they are appreciated by the people of the United States, and that as a people they are behind none in honoring their memories. Such feelings, if cherished, will draw into closer communion, and increase good feelings and fellowship among, the people of all lands.

EXPLORATION OF THE COLORADO FINISHED.

MAJOR J. W. POWELL, Chief of the Colorado River Exploring Expedition, accompanied by his brother, Captain W. H. Powell, arrived in this city last evening, having performed his task and made a complete exploration of the path pursued by that stream. After all that has been published about this Expedition and its loss, according to the lying statement of Risdon, it was with feelings of pleasure that we met the Major, in the enjoyment of excellent health, after having made his adventurous and hazardous descent of this remarkable river. He appears to have endured the fatigues and anxieties of the trip remarkably well. There are but few men who have the opportunity in this life of learning what the world think of them after they are supposed to be dead. Major Powell is one of those few. Though Risdon's statement was quickly contradicted by Mrs. Powell, still there was a feeling of wide-spread anxiety on the subject throughout the country, and many regrets were expressed, before the contradiction came to hand, at the loss of so valuable a life as his, together with eulogies to his memory.

We gathered from his conversation, in which we were very much interested, a few of the features of his journey, which we lay before our readers, to

whom everything connected with the Colorado river is interesting.

After the accident to the boat, an account of which has already appeared in our columns, the party performed a land journey of about thirty miles, to the Indian Agency, where, after obtaining three sacks of flour and other supplies, they again started down the river, passing through a cañon, which from the entire absence of vegetation they named the Cañon of Desolation and had a pleasant trip until they reached the junction of Green and Grand rivers. Upon leaving the junction of Green and Grand they entered Cataract cañon, so called from being filled with cataracts, the latter being so numerous that the average distance between them is not more than half a mile. From a point fifty miles below the junction of Grand and Green rivers the cañon is broken by a lateral valley coming in from the south-east.

On leaving Cataract the party entered a cañon, about twelve miles long, which they named Narrow Cañon, at the foot of which they found a very dirty stream, upon which some of the men bestowed the euphonious name of "Dirty Devil Creek." From this creek they entered Mound Cañon, the sides of which are composed of beautiful mounds of orange colored sandstones, which had been formed by the erosion of the water. In this cañon they continued to the mouth of the San Juan, another dirty stream, running in from the west.

Leaving the San Juan they entered Monument Cañon, containing many monuments of red sandstone, formed by the same agencies as the mounds of red sandstone mounds in the other cañon. They next reached the Paria, or Elk river. From there to the mouth of the Little Colorado, the party passed through Marble cañon, so named because the rocks forming the sides of the cañon consist of variegated marble,—white, slate, gray, cream-colored, pink, purple and chocolate, beautifully polished by the action of the waves. Probably no finer marble can be found in the world than in this cañon.

From the Little Colorado the region for about ten miles, has been disturbed by igneous agencies, lava being scattered over the rocks, showing at some period, the outburst of a volcano, the location of which they were unable to discover. Leaving this region they entered the Grand Cañon of the Colorado, which makes three great bends to the south, and three corresponding bends to the north, swinging around to the mouth of the Virgen, its general course being west; the distance to the mouth of the Virgen river, in a direct line is about 140 miles; but by the river, owing to the sinuosity of its course, nearly 300. The walls of the Grand Cañon of the Colorado have a granite base, the floor of the river being granite, and they are surmounted by marble cliffs; the granite base varies from a few to 800 feet in height; above the granite base tower marble walls to the height of 2500 feet. This cañon extends to Spanish Valley, about forty miles from the mouth of the Virgen, and the party were upwards of three weeks in traveling it.

The country throughout the entire length of the river traversed by Major Powell is rocky, and characterized by an almost entire absence of timber. There is no country on its banks susceptible of settlement. The peculiar color of the Colorado, from which its name arises, is owing to the washing of the red sandstone forming Mound and Monument Cañons; but the water in many places varies, being gray, green or red, according to the color of the rocks in the vicinity.

The first human beings they saw on their journey, after leaving the Indian Agency, was about six miles from the mouth of the Virgen, where they saw three Indians. At the mouth of the Virgen they met with Brother Joseph Asay and his two sons, who were fishing.

From the mouth of the Virgen Major Powell sent an Indian to St. Thomas for his mail matter, and upon the news of the arrival of the party being made known there, Bishop Leithhead and Bro. Andrew Gibbons went down, taking moccasins and flour, and other necessities for their use. The men and boats were sent by Major Powell from the mouth of the Virgen, down to Fort Mohave, and he and his brother, Captain W. H. Powell, came to St. Thomas with Bishop Leithhead, who furnished them the necessary animals to overtake Bro. Henry Nebeker, who had started northward with a four mule team, which they did by traveling all night. They came on with him to this city.