

THE GREAT CALAMITY.

The Present Aspect of Affairs at the Mine.

Startling Rumors as to the Origin of the Fire.

The Jealousies of the Irish and Welsh Miners.

The Evidence Clear that the Shaft was Fired.

Measures of Relief all Over the Country.

MATTERS AT THE MINE.

The Present Aspect of the Disaster—Facts and Rumors—Incendiarism Charged—Bitter Feeling Between the Irish and Welsh Miners—The Scenes of To-day at the Mine—Aid for the Sufferers.

Special Dispatch to the New-York Times.

SCRANTON, Sept. 10.—Although the excitement of the past four days has measurably subsided and business in all the towns is generally resumed, the mines are yet deserted, and probably none will be worked before Monday. The catastrophe is yet eagerly discussed, especially among miners who gather in groups in their hamlets, and in the towns, and among whom startling rumors are current this afternoon. In Hyde Park, where many of the lost belonged, it was openly asserted and widely believed, that the fire was the result of design. The rumor first developed a most interesting and singular fact that was quoted in support of the charge. It is said, on the authority of a leading miner, who had charge of the explorations of the mine in search of the dead, that the wooded funnel leading from the furnace to the bottom of the shaft had not been burned at all, and that the brettee or cribbing dividing the shaft into two compartments at the bottom of the shaft had been merely charred and not destroyed. These are undoubtedly facts, and are difficult to explain on any other ground than that the fire in the brettee began some distance from the bottom of the shaft. The charge of incendiarism is founded mainly on this circumstance, and it is alleged that it was easy for any one to reach the shaft and fire the brettee through the tunnel, and retreat unobserved and uninjured.

In addition to this, it is currently reported that some Irish miners said that the "nanny goats," as they term the Welsh, would go down the shaft some day and never come up alive, and that since the accident, and while efforts were being made to open the mine and search for the entombed, some of the same men were overheard to say that too much fuss was being made about the "nanny goats." There is, and always has been, bitter antagonism between the Welsh and Irish miners, and this talk among the former is probably nothing more than its reflex; but the sound furnace funnel and bottom of the brettee are perplexities which are not parties to their animosities.

It is absolutely certain that fire was communicated from the brettee some distance from the top. By actual measurement it is burned only ninety feet from the mouth of the shaft, and is almost totally uninjured from there to within a few feet of the bottom, where it is burned again, as if it had caught from the debris falling from above. There is a powerful draft upward in the shaft, and if the brettee had caught at the bottom it must have been totally destroyed all the way up. But all these minute details of the present condition of the mine, which may throw a flood of light upon the disaster, will doubtless be developed by the inquest, which commences to-morrow. It is singular, however, that THOMAS CAGSON, who is ready to testify to the facts related, has not yet been subpoenaed as a witness.

The scenes at the mines to-day have not been exciting. Working parties have been engaged on the surface removing debris, and several squads descended and made explorations of the mine. The dead mules cumbered several of the gangways, and they had so far decomposed as to create a horrible stench, which was unavoidable in these confined spaces. Sulphuric acid was taken down and used upon them as a ready means of annihilation. Rumors were rife at Hyde Park and other villages that more dead bodies were in the mine, and for the purpose of satisfying the doubting further explorations were made, but without finding any. Notwithstanding this proof, rumors continued to thrive of numerous bodies being found.

Subscriptions to the relief fund are pouring in rapidly from various quarters in this section. The following have been offered to-day: Delaware and Hudson Canal Coal Company, \$3,000; Thomas Dickson, \$500; C. F. Young, \$300; E. M. Weston, \$200; R. Mandell, \$100; East Boston Mining Company, Kingston, \$500; Jervis Langdon, \$500; Joseph J. Albright, \$200; Phelps & Chase, \$100; George Coray, \$100; H. G. Pierce, \$100; Monies & Pughe, \$100; C. F. Matties, \$100, and a number of other smaller subscriptions, making a total of \$6,051.

The Closing Scenes—Incidents of the Disaster—The Funerals of Yesterday—The Mine Fully Explored—Action of Governor Geary—Relief for the Sufferers—The Fund—Cause of the First Exaggerated Reports—The Inquest.

From Our Special Correspondent.

SCRANTON, Friday, Sept. 10—2:30 P. M.

To-day has been in striking contrast with yesterday. The hum of peaceful industry, it is true, is not yet heard in the Wyoming and Lackawanna Valleys, but the attention of the whole population is no longer concentrated upon that scene at Avondale. There is no longer the spectacle of an entire people gazing in spirit down that blackened shaft with longing and dread, for now the worst is known. Suspense is over; the dead have been counted, and the widows and orphans numbered. The mine is no longer a mystery, and there is no longer a fear that the hardy explorer will meet a victim of its peculiar construction in any of its gangways, airways or chambers. It is still a horror, and must be forever, but it is now a horror of mathematical exactness, and can never again assume any undefined shape.

INCIDENTS AND SCENES.

The history of the catastrophe, like that of a battle, will probably never be complete. The minute details in which lie the dramatic force of the event, can never be fully gathered. One man could no more absorb the events momentarily occurring during those four intense days and nights at Avondale shaft, than could a single observer take in the minutiae of a battle in the wilderness. But as these incidents are culled from the memories of the actors in the great drama they are as worthy of record as though seen by the fresh individual.

Everything in the work of rescuing the entombed was done, devised and supervised by committees of miners. On the last day of bring-

ing up the dead, the person in charge of the rope that was attached to the platform used for that purpose and letting down the rescuers, became convinced of its insecurity, and a "committee" went to examine it. These men, after a minute inspection, pronounced the rope perfectly reliable and even better than a new one, and would not have it changed. A little later another committee was called, and another inspection being made, arrived at the same conclusion, whereupon the person in charge, by merely shaking the rope violently, unloosened the ends where it was spliced, and despite the protests it was removed and a new rope substituted.

No men or set of men were probably ever before called upon to endure such extreme hardships in the midst of a thickly-peopled country, as were the men engaged about the mine. A field telegraph office was established on a pile of boards, near the crater, and there an operator sat without adequate protection from the weather for forty-eight hours without a moment's relief. The miners, Sheriff, Coroner, jury and others, were engaged, night and day, during the four days, with short respites for some of them, and even the brutes were called upon by the magnitude of the disaster for extraordinary exertion, as the little bay horse was required to trot around the drum, colling the rope that was hoisting the dead for thirty consecutive hours.

There were many weird night scenes, especially during Tuesday and Wednesday nights, when the great crowd did not diminish and there were no other means of illumination than a few lanterns. The imagination can scarcely conceive the solemn weirdness of the scene when one of the dead was borne out of the tunnel upon the little plateau, and the dim lantern light being thrown upon the face, the Coroner's jury gathered around for the official viewing of the dead. Nor is it an experience of every-day life for a man to spend a stormy night in a freight car piled high with coffins, with a little way above him, on the mountain side, a miner's dwelling, where a woman wailed all night long over the dead bodies of her husband and two stalwart sons. I have spoken as I was bound to do of the sublime courage and devotion displayed by the men who went down the shaft to remove the dead; but there were others not called on for that hazardous service who were constant in their response to all demands, and worked willingly and unceasingly in their several ways in the service of humanity, who are entitled to scarcely less of public respect. The disaster has some little recompense in the grand spectacle it has afforded of man's humanity for man.

THE LAST FUNERALS.

There have been but two of the lost miners buried to-day in Scranton, but the attendance was large, owing to the presence of the miners of the Delaware and Hudson Company, who came down from Carbondale under the impression that all the burials were to take place to-day. Had they been in attendance yesterday the funerals would have been much more impressive than they were. The burials of the remaining victims have taken place in the various surrounding towns.

HOPES AND FEARS.

Speculation is yet rife as to how and when the victims died. Hope was entertained until the last that some one of those entombed men, stifled by the insidious gas had written down the facts of the fire and the movements and efforts of its victims, but that is now dissipated. The mine has been thoroughly searched, as well as the persons of the dead, and not a line has been found; hence the exact moment and manner of death must always remain matter for conjecture. Great stress has been laid on the fact that the dinner-cans and canteens were found full; and those who believe that man must eat and drink under all circumstances have thereon founded a belief that death must have ensued in a very few moments after the fire began. There are many circumstances tending to produce this impression; but with the reflective the full cans are not counted as conclusive evidence of the fact. It is well known that there have been cases in England and Wales where entombed miners have left an ample record of the cause of the disaster, and great regret is expressed that it was not done in this case. As was telegraphed last night, there is an intense desire to know exactly how the fire was communicated to the shaft, and new theories as to its origin are constantly encountered, some of which are grotesque and many untenable. A favorite idea is that of the swinging grate under the shaft, mentioned yesterday, and it is claimed now that it must have had a wood fire in it, as those at the time of the catastrophe at the top of the shaft noticed sparks flitting upward some seconds before the fire was discovered. But the origin of the fire can never be definitely ascertained, and as carelessness upon the part of the miners can never be proved, and parsimonious recklessness upon the part of the owners can be easily shown, the verdict of the coroner's jury will be sure to be directed decisively against the latter.

ACTION OF GOVERNOR GEARY.

The disaster is certain to result in the State assuming more direct supervision of the mining interest than heretofore. Governor GEARY arrived at Scranton early this morning, and taking a special train at Wilkesbarre, from thence proceeded by carriage to Avondale Mine. His object is to procure the most full and reliable information of the catastrophe upon its scene, in order that he may present the subject fully and intelligently to the Legislature in his next annual message. He has not arrived at any positive conclusions as to the measures it will be proper for him to recommend, but he is convinced that something must be done to render the recurrence of the casualty next to impossible.

THE AVONDALE RELIEF FUND

is fast becoming respectable in amount, but is not accumulating as it should. It amounts so far as returns have been made up to this morning to \$11,108 50, derived from the following sources: New-York Stock Exchange, \$5,000; New-York Gold Exchange, \$2,500; Hon. ASA PACKER, \$2,500; Governor GEARY, \$500; Hon. THURLOW WEED, \$100; PAXTON & HAMMOND, of Rupert, Penn., \$100; Senator SCOTT, \$50; Hebrew Congregation of Scranton, \$134 50; town of Providence, \$158; Carlton-avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, N. Y., \$45; Metropolitan Hook and Ladder No. 8, \$20; a "Poor Man," \$1. These contributions, however, have been spontaneous, and no organized effort has yet been made to collect funds. A call will soon be made, and meantime subscriptions can be sent to H. B. WRIGHT or THOMAS P. HUNT, Wilkesbarre; W. W. WINTON or GEORGE CORAY, Scranton; WM. L. WILSON, Plymouth; THEODORE STRONG, Pittston, and GEO. H. STUART, Philadelphia.

There are sixty-one widows and more than one hundred orphans suffering for the necessities of life and aid must come more liberally than it has. The long strike, which had only been over four days when the disaster occurred, had depleted the miners of all their substance and they are unable to extend help to the families of their unfortunate comrades. The assistance must come from other sources. New-York has already done nobly, and the liberality of the metropolis is thankfully recognized coupled with the hope that other communities may go and do likewise.

THE EXAGGERATION.

There is a demand if unspoken thankfulness that there are no more widows and orphans, and that the disaster had no greater scope. My dispatches of Tuesday evening contained the first information given the public, that the number of men engaged in the mine had been grossly exaggerated, but I noticed that people clung tenaciously to the 202, first announced, and seemingly upon good authority. Mr. SCRANTON and Mr. CRANDALL, the Associated Press agents here, who sent out the first

dispatches obtained the figures from CONRAD LEE, the outside Superintendent of Avondale mine, who was naturally supposed to be the only person above ground having the information. Had LEE been at all vague on the subject, a positive statement would not have been made, but as he said 202, and was only in doubt whether there was not one more, the figures were sent in the belief that they were true, and not from any desire to magnify the disaster. The same remarks apply to my figures of Tuesday night, when I placed the number in the mine as between 138 and 150. That information was obtained from Mr. W. R. STORRS, the General Agent of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Company, and as stated, were based upon the working capacity of the mine, the known absence of nine miners and nine helpers, and the presumption that except these the full force was at work. It is now absolutely certain that no more than 108 were in the mine at the moment of the catastrophe, and nobody seems to know why the mine was not being fully worked on that last day of its existence. Happily it was not, and that the coal magnates do not know why is a proof of the carelessness with which the interior of the mines are supervised.

THE INQUEST.

To-morrow morning, at 10 o'clock, the taking of testimony will begin at Plymouth before the Coroner, and no prophecy can be made as to the time that will be consumed in the proceedings. If the whole system of mining is to be put into the legal crucible, days must elapse before a conclusion is reached. The miners can show, by experts among themselves, who have passed years underground both in Europe and here, that by ordinary care and liberal management, mining in the Pennsylvania anthracite coal region can be made as healthful and safe as any industrial surface pursuit, and there is no likelihood that they will let the great disaster pass without showing why it is that he can dig and delve only with his life in constant jeopardy.

E. C.

Further Relief for the Avondale Sufferers.

An informal meeting of citizens was held in the Mayor's office yesterday morning. The Mayor presided, and Marshal TOOKER acted as Secretary. Among those present were Comptroller CONNOLLY, RICHARD O'GORMAN, Colonel JOLINE, DON ALONZO CUSHMAN, Senator MORTON and Mr. VAN RANST. The Mayor said it was quite unnecessary to make any extended remarks on the fearful calamity which had occurred. The public Press had already given the full details. The Common Council had taken action in the matter, but something more was required. He would suggest that subscription lists be prepared on which persons could enter their names for 10 cents, 50 cents, \$100, or an unlimited amount; that these lists be left at the hotels, banks, brokers' offices, leading wholesale and retail stores, newspaper offices, &c., and that, when filled up, they be transmitted, with the subscriptions, to the Treasurer of the fund.

The Mayor's suggestions were adopted, and on motion Alderman CUSHMAN was appointed Treasurer of the fund.

Orders were then given for the preparation of subscription lists, the first of which the Mayor headed with a donation of \$100, and in a few minutes afterward a check for \$200 from Mrs. OSWALD OTTENDORFER, one of \$100 from Mr. H. V. STARKWEATHER, and one of \$130 from the Deputy Collectors of Assessments and their clerks, were handed in.

All the *attaches* of the Mayor's office are to be employed for one day in soliciting subscriptions to the fund, distributing lists, &c.

Up to last evening the employees of the Comptroller's office had subscribed \$650 to the fund.

ACTION OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN.

The Board of Aldermen met at 4 P. M. yesterday, Mr. COMAN in the chair, and concurred in the resolution appointing a Joint Committee to solicit subscriptions for the relief of the families of the Avondale miners.

The following gentlemen were appointed as such Committee: CUSHMAN, NORTON, WARD, HARDY and McQUADE.

The Board then adjourned to Monday next at 2 P. M.

The Committee subsequently met and elected Assistant Alderman JACKSON Chairman, and Alderman CUSHMAN Treasurer.

On motion of Aldermen HARDY the Chairman and Treasurer were appointed to confer with the Mayor and ascertain what measures he had taken in the premises.

The Committee then adjourned.

ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

We have received \$5 for the Avondale sufferers from an anonymous subscriber, in addition to the amounts previously acknowledged.

At a special meeting of the Caledonian Club, held last evening, the sum of \$100 was donated toward the relief of the Avondale sufferers.

The following appeal is being extensively circulated among the Police force:

To the Members of the Metropolitan Police:

GENTLEMEN: In view of the terrible calamity which has overtaken 203 miners in the Avondale coal mine, Pennsylvania, thereby leaving about 600 widows and orphans, most of them, no doubt, in destitute circumstances, it is proposed by some of the members of the Force that each member pay into the hands of the Precinct Treasurer of "Metropolitan Police Mutual Aid Association," and he to Secretary of the Association, such an amount as the said member shall feel able to give for the pecuniary relief of the bereaved families, at the same time tendering our heartfelt sympathy in their distress.

Captain JOHN CAMERON,
Sergeant J. P. CONKLIN,
Roundsmen HENRY WHEELER,
Committee.

NEW-YORK, Sept. 9, 1869.

The response thus far is most gratifying, a considerable sum having been collected.

The Thistle Benevolent Association, of the City of New-York, yesterday adopted the following:

Resolved, That \$100 be sent to the relief of the families of the miners whose lives were lost at the Avondale disaster, and the Treasurer is hereby ordered to draw a check for the same.

The following circular, addressed to railroad managers, agents and employees, has been issued:

The undersigned, railroad managers, agents and employees, request a meeting of their associates at the Astor House, Room No. 14, on Saturday, the 11th inst., at 12 o'clock, noon, for the purpose of devising some means of giving aid to the sufferers by the late terrible calamity at the coal mines in Pennsylvania. A full attendance is urged:

Charles E. Noble, General Eastern Agent Michigan Central Railroad; J. Myers, Agent South Shore Line, No. 9 Astor House; M. B. Spaulding, Agent N. Y. C. Railroad, No. 239 Broadway; J. L. Fossler, Agent Union Line; J. W. Sweeney, General Eastern Agent Pacific Railroad; Jos. W. Prince, General Eastern Agent M. and St. P. Railroad; H. C. Marshall, General Eastern Agent M. and L. Railroad Line; J. J. Spruill, General Agent Illinois Central Railroad; A. B. De Friesse, Agent N. Y. and Montreal Line; George T. Nutter, Eastern Freight Agent C. and N. W. Railroad; J. B. Yates, General Agent Southern Mail Route; R. G. Hoyt, Agent C. B. and Q. Railroad; A. H. Ward, Agent Erie Railroad, No. 241 Broadway; G. J. Caldwell, Agent Erie Railroad, No. 241 Broadway; J. J. Hollister, S. S. Line, No. 9 Astor House; J. H. More, Agent Red Line; C. Shuttler, Contracting Agent Red Line; H. C. Barr, Passenger Agent L. S. and M. S. Railroad; J. Farnsworth, Agent Merchants' Dispatch, No. 175 Murray Street; H. W. Carr, Agent People's Dispatch, No. 175 Murray Street; W. P. Robin on, General E. Agent T. W. and W. No. 254 Broadway; A. T. Wilds, Agent "A" Line, No. 254 Broadway; J. J. Geer, Pier No. 2 North River; Geo. E. Jarvis, Agent G. W. and D. and M. Railroad; John T. Sanford, Agent C. R. I. and P. Railroad, No. 237 Broadway; W. G. Van Demark, Agent Empire Line, No. 265 Broadway; A. C. Rose, Agent G. W. Dispatch, No. 231 Broadway; W. H. Perry, Supt. G. W. Dispatch, do.; Peter Mallett, General Agent Atlantic Coast Line; A. C. Barnouay, Agent Mer. Protective Freight Union of St. Louis; E. Cummings, Supt. Mer. Dispatch, No. 113 Broadway; J. Chittenden, Supt. People's Dispatch, No. 113 Broadway; H. Higbee, Agent White Line, No. 239 Broadway.