

Chatham Observer.

VOL. I. NO. 34.

PITTSBORO, N. C., FRIDAY, JULY 18, 1902

51.00 A Year

MINE DISASTER

Scores of Men Killed by a Terrible Explosion in a Pit at Johnstown, Pa.

PARTY OF RESCUERS DEAD

Heroic Efforts of Relief Parties—Heartrending Scenes at Mine's Entrance—Awful Stories of Survivors.

Johnstown, Pa.—Johnstown has again been visited by an appalling disaster, only less frightful than the awful calamity of May 31, 1889, in cost of life. A mine explosion took place in the Cambria Steel Company rolling mill mine, under Westmont, H. B. and the number of dead may reach 125 or more men.

President Powell Staehle gave out the following statement:

"The disaster is an awful one, and came on us entirely unexpected. The mine had been inspected only three days ago, and was pronounced in satisfactory condition. In the thirty years that the mine has been in operation no serious accident has occurred. The cause is yet indefinite, but I believe it was caused by gas escaping from the fifth heading, which was closed and not being worked because it contained gas, into the sixth heading.

"The number of casualties is now placed at 125. No list of the names of the dead mine can be given, for the majority of them were foreigners and were known only by check and not by name. The only way their names will ever be known, if the bodies are not recovered in time for identification, will be by their families sending their names to us.

"It is stated that 600 men were in the mine at the time of the disaster. On the following day thirty were known to be dead and twenty-two presumed. Four hundred, so the mine officials claimed, escaped when the explosion occurred, leaving eighty-eight to be accounted for. Some of these, according to those who were in charge of the rescue work, were dead, but the majority, they claim, had escaped from the mine. Heads of rescue parties, and others who were familiar with the different headings in the mine, it was learned that the total list of dead would amount to 125.

"From the positions of the bodies found by the rescuers who entered the mine the miners were evidently cutting their lunches when suddenly struck down by the explosion. They were seated in groups of five and ten, with their buckets and the remains of their lunches scattered over the floor. Evidently their lives were snuffed out quickly and easily. It is believed that some bodies may never be recovered.

"Outside of the property loss this catastrophe will cost the Cambria Steel Company a large sum. The company has for many years past paid to the family of every person killed in its employ \$10,000, outside of what it expended for medical purposes, and it has paid every man who lost an eye, limb, or became otherwise partially disabled, the sum of \$5,000. It is understood this will not be deviated from.

"Measures for relief of the stricken families have already been taken. As far as can be learned there was not a dozen Americans killed. The rest were Huns and Slavs.

"The explosion occurred in what is known in the miners' parlance as the 'Klondike,' under Westmont Hill. There are two openings to the mine. One is near the stone bridge of the Pennsylvania Railroad, just below the depot, the other at Mill Creek, four miles away. All mines in the vicinity were closed, and their miners went to help in the rescue work. The scenes at both openings were heartrending. The explosion occurred at 12:20 p. m., and it was nearly an hour before any general knowledge of what had occurred reached this city.

"As soon as it was known on the surface what had occurred Marshall G. Moore, mining engineer, and one of his assistants, A. G. Prosper, promptly entered the mine at the main opening, and were followed in a short time by Mine Superintendent George T. Robinson. After much trouble they reached one of the telephone lines located in the mine, and reported that it was impossible to find out the full extent of the disaster. Their progress was stopped by noxious gases and they were obliged to escape through the Mill Creek exit of the mine. It was by this exit that all those who escaped from the mine got out.

"In the meantime the terrible news spread like wildfire all over the city. In hundreds of homes there was the most pathetic scenes. Mothers, wives, daughters, sons and relatives were frantic with grief. Sobbing women and children soon besieged every entrance of the mine, praying that their loved ones might come forth alive from the dark caverns.

"Facing almost certain death, Mine Foreman Harry Rodgers, his assistant, William Blanch, and Fire Bosses John Whitney, John Retallick and John Thomas, entered at the Westmont

opening, and in spite of the noxious gases, proceeded into the depths of the mine. Their effort was in vain, and the five men perished in their heroic attempt to save the lives of others.

"At 4 o'clock two men who had escaped from the mine—Richard Bennett and John Meyers—went back two miles to see what assistance could be rendered, but the faithful stamp drove them back and they fell prostrate, when finally, after a desperate struggle, they reached the outside. It was with difficulty that they were restored to a normal condition.

"Their story of the situation in the mine made it clear that rescue work could not proceed from the Westmont opening, and then hasty preparations were made to begin that sad mission at the Mill Creek entrance.

"The fifteen-year-old son of Harry Rodgers, when he heard that his father had been overcome with after-damp, started down toward the 'Klondike' to help rescue him if possible, and he had no sooner entered the drift which the deadly gas almost overcame than he had to be carried back. His courage prompted his whole length from his mouth, and the men had to force his jaws apart with a stick to prevent lockjaw. Young Rodgers, who is employed in the mine, was among those who escaped through the Mill Creek shaft.

"Tom Foster, an assistant foreman in the 'Klondike' mine, was among the first to escape from the Mill Creek shaft. Shortly after Powell Griffith, fire boss, came up. Foster was in his office when the explosion occurred. His first thought was for the safety of the men under his charge. With the help of Foreman Roberts an effort was made to replace a few of the shattered beams. All the while the fatal fire was closing around them. They did not falter for an instant, but straight into the midst of danger they went.

"The thought, 'Save the men,' was paramount. Through galleries into sections, warning and helping, the two men went. Roberts fell, but Foster staggered on, whether he hardly knew. In the midst of the danger he met Powell Griffith a fine loss. He had faced what seemed certain death in an effort to save his men.

"Forward they went, dragging a candle into a possible place of safety, and giving a word of warning there, until human endurance could stand the strain no longer. Exhausted, they suggested into a heading where the air might be better. There they rested for a moment and then pressed forward where they did not know until finally they wandered into a water level and through it reached a place of safety.

"Said Tom Foster: 'That I escaped I do not know. It seems like a terrible nightmare. Hundreds of times I gave up hope, but from some instinct I stumbled forward until nearly I reached a place of safety.'

"John Whitney, who was beyond the 'Klondike' when the explosion took place, said he was at the heading, one-half mile from the explosion. Several dozen men were overcome by the damp or gas, and I had all I could do to escape. It was terrible. After the explosion it went back to rescue the loss fortunate, and nearly lost our own lives. We got one man and saved his life. I did not see my father, who was struggling to get out. I don't think many outside of the drivers escaped.

"William McInnis was in the upper part of the mine when the explosion came. 'The first I knew of the trouble was when the men came running from what is known as the dip, or lower section. They came running without hats, coats, and some without clothes, and in a terrible state of excitement. As near as I can remember not more than ten came that way, and they escaped, leaving at least 200 in the dip. Solid walls of masonry, three feet thick, were torn down as though barriers of paper. The roofs of the mine were demolished and not a door remains standing.'

"Miners who left by the way of the Mill Creek entrance brought horrible stories of crawling over the dead bodies of their comrades.

"The mine has been open for about fifty years, and is producing 2000 tons per day. It is the property of the Cambria Steel Company, general offices in the Arcade Building, Philadelphia.

Harrisburg, Pa.—Governor Stone has directed James E. Roderick, Chief of the State Bureau of Mines, to go to Johnstown, and investigate the cause of the disaster at the Rolling Mill mine. Mr. Roderick went to Johnstown and immediately began an investigation.

KILLED IN TORONTO FIRE.

Wall Falls, Burying Six Firemen Under Tons of Brick.

Toronto, Ont.—Fire in MacIntosh's hay and grain warehouse on Front street, resulted in the death of six firemen. They were fighting the flames when a large wall collapsed, owing to heat, and buried them. The dead are: David See, twenty-six years old, married; Harry Clark, twenty-six years old, married; Adam Keen, twenty-five years old, unmarried; F. G. Russell, thirty-two years old, married; Joseph Colford, caretaker of fire hall; William Targart, twenty-eight years old, married.

The men climbed the wall to get a better position to extinguish the flames. Just as the wall collapsed they jumped twenty or thirty feet, but were caught under tons of brick, which killed them instantly.

Manitoba Expects Enormous Wheat Crop.

Thomas Greenway, former Premier of Manitoba, says that although there have been heavy rains the province will have an immense crop of wheat. It is reported that the wheat crop will be between seventy and 100 million bushels.

DISBROW HELD FOR MURDER

His Lawyer Declined to Call Witnesses in His Defense.

COURT'S DECISION APPLAUDED

The Prisoner Lost His Self-Control When the District Attorney Declared That He Lied—Justice Foster Said That All the Evidence Pointed in One Direction—Statement of Disbrow's Counsel.

Good Ground, L. L.—Louis Disbrow went back to the Riverhead Jail a prisoner, committed for the action of the next Grand Jury on the charge of murder in the case of Clarence Foster and Sarah R. Lawrence. The hearing came to a sudden ending. Mr. Miles, counsel for the young man, put in no defense, saying that he would wait until the trial of the case to do so, as he felt sure that no matter what evidence was adduced, his client would be held. It is exactly a month ago since Disbrow, Foster and 'Dimple' Lawrence were shot on the drive from Curran's house that ended in two of the party meeting death in the waters of Tiana Bay.

Disbrow took his commitment coolly. Only once did he show any emotion or excitement. That was when District Attorney Smith closed his summing up by shouting at Disbrow: 'You lied, you know you lied.' Disbrow gripped the arms of his chair and began to rise, started more than anything else. Sheriff Wells and Mr. Miles placed their hands on Disbrow and he sat back in his chair.

Justice Foster reviewed the case very fully before announcing the commitment. When the decision was announced the crowd in the hall burst into cheers, and there was much hooting. Deputy Sheriffs tried to stop the demonstration, but it was continued for several minutes.

After the hall was cleared, Mr. Miles said:

"What I expected would happen has happened. Disbrow has been held. It would have been very foolish for me to lay my case at this time when it was practically certain that my client would have to face a trial jury. At that time we shall not only overturn all the evidence to be brought in by the people, but will make the case against the young man look even more foolish than it does now. We shall show that Disbrow was wholly guiltless of any crime whatsoever. I am not at liberty to tell what further action I shall take. I cannot say whether I shall seek Disbrow's release through a writ of habeas corpus. That is a matter to be decided later."

"The attendance was larger than on any day since the trial. Mr. Smith rested his case when several witnesses for the prosecution had been examined. After a controversy about the admission of the record of the proceedings before the coroner, which had been filed with Justice Foster, Attorney Miles moved for the dismissal of the prisoner from custody, on the ground that no evidence had been brought in to connect him with the crime, if any crime indeed, had been committed.

Mr. Smith declared that he had traced the three to the water's edge. He wanted to know why Disbrow did not go on the stand and tell his story. The District Attorney dared him to do so. Taking on the statements made by Disbrow to different persons on the day of the tragedy, Mr. Smith, shaking his fist close to Disbrow, shouted that Disbrow lied and he knew he lied.

The justice said that the evidence pointed in one direction. While, perhaps, he said, the evidence was not of the strongest character, there was no doubt that there had been some crooked work somewhere, and there remained much to be explained that should be explained and should be submitted to the Grand Jury. Therefore he committed the prisoner.

After the formal papers had been drawn Sheriff Wells took Disbrow back to the jail in Riverhead, to remain until the fall term of court.

MORGAN'S OFFER CONFIRMED.

Admiralty Can Control British Ships in Combine for Fifty Years.

In the House of Commons the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty, H. C. Arnold-Forster, replying to William Redmond, the Irish leader, confirmed the report that J. Pierpont Morgan had offered to place all the British ships in the new combine at the disposal of the Admiralty for the next fifty years, on certain terms.

He added that the offer could only be dealt with in relation to British shipping generally and the Atlantic trade position, which was being very carefully considered by the Government.

DEVASTATION BY SAND STORM.

Reclined Desert Swept Clear and \$1,000,000 Damage Done.

San Francisco, Cal.—For three days a sand storm raged in the Indo Valley in the Colorado Desert, and an artificial oasis of 900 acres, made by digging artesian wells, has been swept clear of vegetation, the loss being \$1,000,000.

The desert had been planted in melons, and 300 carloads of melons, worth \$1200 a car, were almost ready for shipment when the storm broke. During its progress the thermometer registered 120 degrees in the shade.

REPLY OF THE VATICAN

Settlement of Friars' Land Questions by Arbitration Proposed.

The Philippine Government to Buy Lands of Religious Orders, the Holy See Acting as Intermediary.

Rome.—The answer of the Vatican to the note of Judge Taft, Governor of the Philippine Islands, concerning religious affairs in the archipelago, has been delivered to Judge Taft. The answer follows:

The contract which the Vatican proposes shall be signed by both parties comprises twelve articles.

The first article says the Philippine Government is to buy the lands of the four religious orders concerned, the Holy See acting as intermediary.

The second article describes what are the agricultural lands to be bought.

The third article says that if some of these lands are possessed by corporations the friars will sell their share.

The fourth article establishes a tribunal of arbitrators, to be composed of five members, two of whom are to be chosen by the Vatican, two by the Philippine Government, and the fifth by the other four. In case of disagreement as to the fifth member, he shall be chosen in common accord by the Pope and President Roosevelt.

The fifth article provides that the work of the arbitrators shall begin on January 1, 1903.

The sixth article refers to title deeds, these will be transferred to the Philippine Government.

Article 7 sets forth that payment is to be made in Mexican dollars in the period of time proposed by Judge Taft in his note of July 3, interest during the period of payment accruing at four per cent.

Article 8 deals with the transfer to the church of spoken crown lands with ecclesiastical buildings on them.

The ninth article proposes amicable accord in the matter of the existing charitable or educational trusts which are in dispute. In the event of a failure to agree in these matters recourse is to be had to the arbitrators, to whom will also be submitted the case of the Medical College of San Jose at Manila.

The tenth article provides for arbitration as to the indemnity the United States shall pay for the ecclesiastical buildings used during the war in the Philippines.

According to the eleventh article, the expenses of the tribunal of arbitrators are to be paid by the Philippine Government.

Article 12 declares that the Holy See in the sphere of action which is in its competence, shall use all its influence for the pacification of the Philippine Islands and in favor of the people to the established Government, and that it shall prevent all political opposition on the part of the clergy, both regular and secular.

SHARK TOWED THEM TO SEA.

Queer Things Happening in the Gulf Since It Got So Salty.

New Orleans, La.—From all parts of the Mississippi Sound and the bays and bayous off the Louisiana and Mississippi coast come wonderful stories of the unprecedented saltness of the Gulf waters and of the appearance of deep water fish hitherto unknown here. The belief is growing that the volcanic disturbances manifested by the Mardi Gras disaster are the cause. At Horn Point, Harrison County, Miss., a number of devil fish, one of them measuring thirty feet from tip to tip, have been harpooned by fishermen. There has also been an invasion of man-eating sharks.

A party of gentlemen from New Orleans while fishing on Ship Island fastened their three boats together and steered them with a heavy anchor. A shark became entangled in the anchor, carried all three boats out to sea and finally wrecked them on the shore. The fishermen narrowly escaped with their lives.

BLOW UP JAIL TO ESCAPE.

Prisoners Use Dynamite, But Jailer Holds Them in Check With a Revolver.

St. Joseph, Mo.—Forty prisoners confined in the county jail made a daring attempt to escape by blowing up the rear end of the jail with dynamite. The building was badly wrecked and one wing of the court house shattered. The prisoners had gone into their cells and none of them was injured. Jailer Thomas rushed to the scene the minute the explosion occurred, and revolver in hand, guarded the hole torn out by the explosion until assistance arrived, thus frustrating a wholesale delivery. Not a prisoner got away.

James Blakes, under a ten years' sentence for highway robbery, is believed to be the prisoner who applied the dynamite, assisted by Leck Allen, under sentence for the same crime.

WAS JUST AS OLD AS THE U. S.

Death of a Tennessee Negro Who Was Born on July 4, 1776.

Knoxville, Tenn.—Ferry Chesney, the oldest man in Tennessee, died at his home on the summit of Copper Ridge on July 4, at the age of 126 years, the day of his death being his birthday.

Chesney was born in Virginia on July 4, 1776. The day independence was declared. As a slave he belonged to Jonathan Jackson at Clarksville on the Roanoke River. When he was twelve years old he was thrown into the presence of George Washington while attending his master.

For fifty years he had lived a hermit's life, and it was several days after his death when his body was discovered.

MINOR EVENTS OF THE WEEK

WASHINGTON ITEMS.

Secretary Meady will reduce the naval force in the Philippines. Some of the warships will be brought home and a reorganization of the Asiatic squadron will be made.

The War Department censured Lieutenant Arnold, Fourth Cavalry, for failing to prevent cruelty to Filipinos by his men, but acquitted him of direct complicity in such practices.

The President issued an order forbidding persons in the classified Civil Service to use outside influence in securing promotion.

This Government received and will grant a request from China to use its good offices with the Powers to secure the evacuation of Tien-Tsin.

OUR ADOPTED ISLANDS.

The Gardner inquiry at Manila was closed, Major Gardner refusing to produce any evidence in support of his charges of cruelty against American diers.

The Sultan of Bacolor-Mindanao, P. I., sent an insulting worded letter to the commander of the American expedition to Lake Lanao, in Mindanao, in which he threatened to begin offensive operations in August. The Sultan was strengthening his position.

DOMESTIC.

Another suit was brought against the United States Steel Corporation to prevent the conversion of the preferred stock.

Jumping from the Brooklyn Bridge, an unidentified man committed suicide.

Financial difficulties were believed to be responsible for the suicide of Colonel G. D. Felton, Deputy Quartermaster-General of the New Jersey National Guard.

Chicago financiers believed that the Standard Oil Company was back of a movement to effect a consolidation of the big packing interests on lines similar to the Northern Securities Company.

President John Mitchell of the United Mine Workers failed in a final appeal to the heads of the Coal Trust to end the strike by arbitration.

Two young men, Walter Arnold and an unnamed companion, were drowned while swimming in the Maumee River, near Toledo, Ohio.

The town of White Horse, an old Indian trading post in Woods County, Okla., was destroyed by fire; loss, \$100,000. A. E. Phillips, a farmer, was fatally burned.

A farmer named Gwynes, living on the Staggley plantation near Americus, Ga., killed a negro farmhand, dangerously wounded a negro woman and was himself shot twice as the result of an altercation with the negro.

On his fourth trial for the murder of Owen Ross, John Farr, at Huntingdon, Va., escaped conviction by the jury disagreeing.

Anthracite coal operators made their first move toward resuming by inviting old employees of one mine to apply for work.

The complaint in the Colorado courts against the Smelting Trust was postponed until fall.

Heavy rains in Southern Minnesota and South Dakota did great damage to crops and property.

The engineer and fireman of an excursion train were killed at Elk Rapids, Mich., in a collision.

Two horses valued at \$6000, and owned by Dr. George P. French, of Rochester, N. Y., were killed by lightning.

Twenty-year-old Susie Frazier, of Paducah, Ky., charged in court with killing her uncle by shooting, claimed justification because he was beating her aunt.

Rather than return to New York City on extradition proceedings, William M. Hahn went to jail at Mansfield, Ohio, for an indefinite time.

FOREIGN.

King Edward's recovery was assured and it was said the coronation would occur between August 11 and 15.

Mr. Chamberlain severely cut his scalp in a cab accident in London, being thrown forward and his forehead breaking the glass in the window.

The Madrid express was derailed, owing to some unknown cause, near Guarda, Portugal. Nearly all the cars were wrecked, six persons were killed and twenty-seven were injured.

The season in London was expected to finish brilliantly, owing to the King's recovery.

Business of the London Stock Exchange was not expected to revive until September.

Berlin's watchful police authorities issued a warning against lead drinks in summer weather as being injurious to health.

The official trials at Christiania, Norway, of Admiral Borchgrevink's torpedo-destroying apparatus, gave excellent results.

Beginning next September a weekly express train will leave Moscow for Port Arthur.

Twenty-nine "rusticated" cadets of the Royal Military Academy, at Sandhurst, England, left that institution protesting that they had not been connected with the recent incendiary fires at the college.

The German Government decided to start a system of motor cars in German East Africa, supplementing the main railway.

Irish-American prisoners of war will be released the same as their Boer fellow-fighters.

CORN SOARS TO 90 CENTS

Shorts in the July Option Squeezed on the Chicago Market.

Price the Highest Since 1892, When \$1 Was Reached—Millions Behind the Gates Crowd.

Chicago.—Shorts in July corn were squeezed again, and the cornered delivery went up to 90 cents, the highest price since 1892, when the market touched \$1. July closed at 84 cents on the previous day, an advance of 7 cents over the previous close. Opening bids were from 84 to 85 cents. Shorts were the bidders, and by running the market up to 90 cents a little before noon they got approximately 250,000 bushels. It is estimated that in selling this much the manipulators of the market made a profit of \$600,000, as most of their line, estimated at 15,000,000 bushels, was purchased between 61 and 65 cents.

No excitement was evident in the pit although all were interested in the problem of where the Gates coterie would let the price advance to before losing their grip. The price already is far past the maximum at which Phillips allowed shorts to settle in his first and most successful deal. Shorts who have covered have paid heavily for the privilege, and those who are still on the wrong side of the market are generally believed to be in the most serious predicament of a decade.

Trading, however, was not large. Toward the latter part of the session there was less urgency to buy, prices reacted, and July closed at 87 cents. September corn opened 1/4 lower to 1/4 higher, at 62 to 62 1/2, but on free selling declined to 61 1/2.

Crop advices were favorable, as also was the weather.

New York City.—New York operators in the grain market continued to watch with much interest the further advance in the price of July corn in Chicago. The same option was quoted in the New York market at 18 1/2 cent below the high figure recorded at one time in the Chicago pit—this clearly showing the artificiality of the Chicago price, and as being due, not to this year's crop conditions or prospects, but to the short interest in July. When the high price of 90 cents was reached some small sums of money changed hands here, those representing wagers indicating that the price of 90 cents at least would be reached as a result of the "corner."

According to the gossip in the Street, the Gates pool engineering the rise can command a capital of at least \$25,000,000 for its purposes.

BRIDAL PAIR ARRESTED.

Accused of Poisoning His First Wife and Her First Husband.

Knoxville, Tenn.—A dispatch from Boone County says that Howard Jenkins, a mechanical engineer from Pittsburg, Pa., and his wife, who had been married only three weeks, were arrested for murder. Mrs. Jenkins is the widow of John Fleming. The warrants were issued at the instance of relatives of Fleming and the first Mrs. Jenkins.

The defendants are said to have conspired to murder Mrs. Fleming's husband and Jenkins's first wife in order that they might marry. Both Fleming and Mrs. Jenkins died at the same time, but no suspicion was aroused until the widow and widower were married. It has been sworn that both Fleming and Mrs. Jenkins died from the administration of "night shade" powder.

Mrs. Jenkins is a member of a prominent Boone County family. It was here that she met Jenkins, who had then just come from Pittsburg in the interest of a new manufacturing enterprise.

KITCHENER WARMLY PRAISES BOERS

This He Does in Valletto to the British Troops.

Pretoria, South Africa.—Lord Kitchener's valletto to the troops, after extolling the conduct of the British soldiers in the face of great hardships, and difficulties and against dangerous and offensive antagonists, commended the kind and humane spirit displayed in all ranks, and ends as follows:

"This message would be incomplete were no reference made to the soldierly qualities displayed throughout the campaign by our quondam enemies, and the admirable spirit displayed in carrying out the surrender. Many of those who contended until the end have expressed the hope that they may have, in the future, an opportunity to serve side by side with His Majesty's forces."

MIDGET SLAYER DECLARED SANE.

Girl Who Killed a Married Man Will Have to Face Murder Charge.

Boston, Mass.—Anna Danforth, the dwarf girl who shot and killed A. J. Finney, a married man, at his home in South Framingham last May, has been pronounced sane by Dr. Uday, the alienist who has been making an exhaustive study of her case. That she is not wholly sound mentally was apparent from the first, but that she was so insane as to have been irresponsible for her acts was not proved to the satisfaction of the State.

Those familiar with the history of such cases in this State, however, say it is a moral certainty that no jury will convict Miss Danforth of deliberate murder.

Millions Ahead in Corn Deal.

It is estimated that the Gates syndicate is \$3,412,500 ahead of the Chicago corn deal.