

have been serious, and this, as far as the circumstances are known, seems to have been caused by the most foolhardy carelessness on the part of the injured man which it is possible to conceive, and had this accident been reported to the Inspector, as required by the Act—which was not done, owing apparently to some misunderstanding—a very strict investigation would have been instituted.

Of the two fatal accidents, I have shown that one had nothing to do with any recognized coal mine or mine under the operation of the Act; and therefore it may be said that there has been only one fatal accident during 1882 for 378,272 tons of coal raised, and upwards of one thousand men ordinarily employed, which gives a still more satisfactory result than that for the year 1881.

#### CONCLUSION.

It is impossible to be identified with this department, affecting, as it does, the care and preservation of human life, without taking a deep personal interest in everything concerning its progress; and, although I am satisfied that this feeling is shared equally by its officers, its object, as I have pointed out upon former occasions, is immensely strengthened by the vigilance of all those who are connected with the mines in constantly taking precautions against dangers of all kinds; and, while there is every reason to believe that the almost sacred nature of this duty is generally recognized by those most interested in its observance, it is occasionally disheartening to find instances of gross carelessness and deliberate neglect of ordinary precautions on the part of workmen, who have only themselves to blame for the serious results which sometimes follow this want of attention to their own interests. Last year we had the case of a man who deliberately sounded the coal at his working-place, after being cautioned, and apparently knowing well that it was dangerous, without taking any precaution to set timber or otherwise, with the result that about three tons of coal fell upon him and caused instant death; and this year we hear of a man, immediately after a shot had been blown out, walking up and throwing powder into the hole, sustaining, as a certain result, severe injury, and probably having a fortunate escape from death.

I mention these matters to show the necessity for every one connected with the mines co-operating with the department and with the officers of the mines—many of whom cannot be too highly commended for their care in this respect—in avoiding all causes of danger; and, in view of such cases as those above quoted, it is hardly necessary to add that the most merciful policy of the department will be to continue to enforce the law in all cases in which the circumstances call for the exercise of this authority.

OLIVER WAKEFIELD.

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