

**CARELESSNESS IN THE BOILER-ROOM.**

"Familiarity breeds contempt," is an old saying, says the *Locomotive*, and it is unfortunately true that it holds good in the boiler room. In this case it would be wise to add to the old saw, "and contempt breeds trouble," for many accidents may be traced to the carelessness in management of boilers which naturally follows long connection with them. Especially is this apt to be the case when the man has been so fortunate in his management of a boiler plant for a long time as to have had no serious trouble with it.

It is customary with some mechanics to test new boilers, or old ones which have undergone repairs, by simply subjecting them to a high steam pressure. Why any intelligent person should do this simply passes our comprehension. If a boiler is known to be strong enough to sustain a certain pressure, there is no earthly reason to subject it to that pressure. If it is not absolutely certain that it will sustain any given pressure, then it is the height of folly, and it incurs a risk that no man can afford to take, to apply that pressure in such a manner that, in the event of the boiler not proving strong enough to sustain it, an explosion will inevitably occur.

During the past year we have a record of at least three explosions, all attended by loss of life and great destruction of property, from this cause. The danger in such cases is usually greatly increased by caulking the seams, rivet-heads, etc., where leaks exist while the boiler is under pressure.

Another dangerous practice is the caulking of joints in steam pipes while pressure is on. If pipes or fittings are corroded, as they very frequently are in such cases, there is danger that the chisel or caulking tool may be driven through the pipe. In such a case the sudden escape of steam is more than liable to seriously scald the workman. Quite recently, in a neighboring city, a workman was so seriously scalded in this manner that he died from his injuries. The practice is a very dangerous one, and should never be allowed. Of a similar nature to the above, and one which should be as strongly discountenanced, is the practice of screwing up man hole, hand-hole, and similar plates while boilers are under steam, to stop leakage. A great many accidents have been caused in this manner. A few years ago a battery of three horizontal tubular boilers were fired up, and on raising steam the joint of one of the man hole plates was found to leak quite badly. Instead of letting down the steam and repacking the joint, a wrench was applied, and the attempt was made to stop the leak by screwing up on the bolt. This proving insufficient, a long piece of pipe was slipped over the handle of the wrench, and more force applied. The immediate result was the fracture of the man-hole frame, the explosion of the boiler, the destruction of about \$10,000 worth of property, and the loss of three lives.

Only a few months ago a similar accident occurred in a large city in one of the Middle States, but in this case the boiler was of the sectional type. A cap covering the end of one of the water tubes began to leak, and two men, armed with a 24-inch monkey-wrench, attempted to stop the leak by screwing up the nut on a 3-inch bolt, with 100 pounds of steam on the boiler. Result: one man killed, and two others badly scalded.

Several bad accidents have also happened through the carelessness of men who have tried to take off man-hole and similar plates while boilers were under the steam. This may appear incredible, but it is nevertheless true. Only a short time ago one of our inspectors, while making quarterly visits in a neighboring city, entered a boiler-room, and found a man trying to remove a man-hole plate with 20 pounds of steam on the boiler. He had removed the nut from the bolt, and was trying to drop the plate (in this case the boiler was provided with an internal man-hole frame) into the boiler. He had just begun the job, and the plate, owing to the great pressure on it, had fortunately so far resisted his efforts to dislodge it. It may be inferred that he had a pretty loud call to "get down off that boiler," and very fortunate for him it was, too.

A few months ago a very bad accident occurred in a rubber works, where two men attempted to remove the head from a vulcanizer before shutting off steam. These vessels consist of a cylindrical shell, and the goods to be vulcanized are put in at one end, and the opening closed by a circular plate or door, which is belted to a flange on the end of the cylinder. After the men had removed some of the bolts, the steam pressure proved to be too great for the remaining bolts to withstand, and the head was blown out with great force, killing them instantly, and damaging the building and machinery to a considerable extent.

This list of accidents might be continued almost indefinitely, but we think we have said enough to call the attention of those interested to the fact that too much care cannot be exercised in the management of steam apparatus of all kinds. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety, and it is much easier and more practical to avoid accidents by the constant exercise of the greatest care than it is to judge the fragments when an explosion occurs.

**THE LOGGING OUTLOOK.**

In last week's issue of the *Gazette* we noted the apprehensions felt by the lumbermen on account of the soft weather regarding the getting in of a stock of logs sufficient for next summer's cutting. A good deal of delay had been caused, and estimators were discounting the stock 10 to 25 per cent off what is required, but a change has come over the spirit of their dreams. Freezing weather has been waited for from the boreal regions, and where snow has not fallen the freeze up has rendered the sprinklers available. There is no trouble about shipping in the logs now. Wisconsin is well supplied with snow—too well supplied, in fact, and in some portions of Minnesota and Michigan there is enough to help very materially in the logging operations. Hay will be made while the sun shines (or doesn't shine) and logs will be rushed to the streams until the skidways are bare. By that time another thaw may occur. We are not quite ready yet to decide that this will not be an open winter. But one thing we are convinced of—and that is, the log crop will not be so much as 25 per cent short of actual requirements. But there is time yet for an enforced curtailment. This polar wave may pass away and mild weather prevail in February. We shall know more about it anon.

Of operations in the Northwest the *Lacrosse Republican* says:—

At a meeting of the Menominee River Boom Company, held at Marinette last week, at which were present Senator Sawyer, Jesse Spaulding, of Chicago, Congressman Stephenson and others, the members of the company did not appear to be at all alarmed as to the outcome. They will have with this year's cut and what was left over from last year, sufficient stock to keep them running all next season. There are this season about 5,000 men at work on the Menominee and its tributaries. This year's cut was estimated at 372,000,000 feet, but it will fall below that amount. At the close of last season there was 70,000,000 feet on hand, which, together with the cut this winter will give about 400,000,000 feet for use next summer. The cut on the Peshtigo will amount to about 80,000,000.

In the Eau Claire region the anxiety of lumbermen was relieved by the heavy fall of snow which was general over the entire Northwest. The weather has proven so disastrous that it was thought several contractors would have to throw up their contracts owing to financial embarrassments, but if favorable weather now sets in they will probably come out all right. The cut will be from 20 to 25 per cent short of the estimate, which in round figures is 135,000,000 in the Chippewa district, making the total cut in that district, under the most favorable circumstances, between 450,000,000 and 500,000,000. There will be at the end of this week, between 3,000 and 3,500 men at work in the woods.

Black River Falls lumbermen predict a short cut in their region, even under the most favorable circumstances, and a consequent rise in prices next spring.—*Lumberman's Gazette*.

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