

Mexico I have often been down very deep mines, but to tell you the truth, I always wanted them to be still deeper. On such occasions an excitement takes place, and one's courage is screwed up more than on common occasions. Miners have been at work for four hundred years at Newcastle; and, to supply London alone, they have now to raise up from the bowels of the earth, one million eight hundred thousand chaldrons every year.

Gilbert.—You may depend upon it that very little coal is left in the mines, and that London will soon be without coal.

Traveller.—So far from that, I have good authority for believing that the mines already known, will not be exhausted in many hundred years more. As coal is usually found very deep in the earth, it is necessary to know where it lies, without going to the expense of sinking a pit at a venture.

Edmund.—But how can they know any thing about it, till they get down deep in the ground.

Traveller.—I dare say that you have often seen at the cheesemonger's a little scoop or borer, called a cheese-taster, with which a cheese is bored, so that any one may judge of its quality.

Gilbert.—Oh, yes; and it brings out a nice piece from the very middle of the cheese.

Traveller.—Well, just as the cheesemonger bores his cheese, the miner bores the ground with iron rods, having a chisel at the bottom of them. He is thus able to judge, by the earth he draws up whether he is likely to succeed in getting coal; for from long observation, he knows what sort of earth lies near to coal.

Leonard.—A very capital plan; but I should never have thought of it.

Traveller.—When coal is found, the first thing to be done is to draw off the water, for while that remains, the miners cannot get at the coal. The water is pumped out of the mine, and the coal is brought up the pit, or shaft, by the power of the steam-engine, while large pillars of coal are left standing under ground, to prevent the earth from falling in.

Edmund.—It must be a dangerous trade, and I dare say many accidents take place.

Traveller.—Oh, yes; few men run greater hazards than those who labour underground; and none have more reason to be prepared for eternity. A pious miner of the name of Stephen Karkot, was, not long ago, buried alive by the falling in of the shaft where he was at work; when in that dreadful situation, he contrived to make himself heard by a companion above. He knew that no earthly power could save him; but he expressed his thankfulness in having been brought up in the fear of the Lord, so that he had not then, in that terrible hour, to begin to seek for mercy. His confidence in God was unshaken; he sent a message to his father and mother, that they should not mourn with ungodly sorrow; for that he trusted in his Redeemer, and was at peace, being satisfied that "all was well." You should remember this though not exposed to the perils of the miner.

There are many dangers to be feared beside that of the earth falling in: there is the danger of the rope or chain breaking, which lets men down into the pit and draws them up again; the danger of damp, foul air, of fire, and of water. I will relate to you a remarkable occurrence, as given in a respectable newspaper a short time ago.

"On Thursday, the 20th of June, about eleven o'clock forenoon, while Mr. Montgomerie, banker in Irvine, and another gentlemen were engaged in fishing on the river Garnock, nearly opposite to where they were standing a slight eruption took place in the current of the river, which they at first supposed to be occasioned by the leap of a salmon, but the gurgling motion which succeeded led them to suppose that something serious had occurred, and that the river had broken into the coal mines which surrounded the place on which they stood.

They immediately hastened forward to the nearest pit-mouth, and stated their suspicions, which the pit head-man at first was slow to believe; and it was only after Mr. Montgomerie had strongly remonstrated with him that he prepared to avert the danger.

"By this time, however, the men below had heard the rushing forward of the water, and were making the best of their way to the bottom of the shank; but before they reached it, several of them were up to their necks, in water, and in two minutes more every one of them would have been drowned. Immediately on the whole of the men being got out of the pits, Mr. Dodds, the active manager of the works assembled all his men at the cavity in the

bed of the river, over which they placed a coal-lighter laden with such things as they thought calculated to stop the rush of the water, such as straw, whins clay, &c. All their efforts, however proved unavailing; for the water continued to pour into the mines without obstruction, producing comparatively very little agitation on the surface of the river until the following day, about three o'clock, when a tremendous large space broke down, which, in a short time, engulfed the whole body of the stream, leaving the bed of the river quite dry for more than a mile on each side of the aperture, where there had previously been a depth of fully six feet.

"At this time, the fishes in the channel were seen leaping about in all directions. On the flowing of the tide, the depth of water between the chasm and the sea increased to about nine feet, then the desolation was awful. The long sweep, and prodigious quantity of water rushing into the chasm at this time, made the sight impressive beyond description. Three men, who were in a boat near the spot had a very narrow escape from being sucked into the vortex; for no sooner had the men got out, than the boat was drawn down with fearful rapidity. The great body of water continued to pour down the chasm until the whole workings of the pit, which extended for many miles, were completely filled. After which, the river gradually assumed its natural appearance, and the water attained its ordinary level.

"At this time the pressure in the pits became so great, from the immense weight of water impelled into them, that the confined air, which had been forced back into the high workings, burst through the surface of the earth in a thousand places, and many acres of ground were to be seen all at once bubbling up like the boiling of a cauldron. In some places, the current was so impetuous, as to form cavities four or five feet in diameter, and producing a roaring noise like the escape of steam from an over-charged boiler. Immense quantities of sand and water were thrown up like showers of rain during five hours, and, in the course of a short time, the whole of Bartonholm, Longford, Snodgrass, and Nethermaims were laid under water; by which calamity from five to six hundred persons, men, women, and children, have been entirely deprived of employment. By this unfortunate occurrence these extensive works have been injured to an extent which almost precludes the hope of their ever being restored to their former state."

Edmund.—That is a most wonderful account, and it appears odd to me that men can be found who will run such fearful risks to get their livelihood.

Traveller.—It is not many years since a dreadful explosion took place at the Felling Colliery, near Newcastle, by which more than a hundred persons perished in an instant. The death of these persons, and the injuries sustained by others, plunged nearly five hundred widows and children into affliction and distress. Sir Humphry Davy invented a safety lamp to guard against such terrible calamities. It consists of a lamp having a cover made of very fine wire gauze, that is wires woven closely together. The light passes from the lamp between the wires to assist the miner in his operations, but the fire damp, or foul air, is too thick, or rosy, to get at the flame, and thus it cannot explode, as nothing but actual blaze will set it on fire.

Edmund.—Sir Humphry Davy must have been a very clever man.

Traveller.—He was indeed. Some improvements, I understand have latterly been made in the safety lamp,—but my watch reminds me that I have a little exceeded the time I intended to devote to you in completing my narrative. What I have said to you on the different subjects which have occupied our attention, may furnish thought for many a future hour. While I am journeying abroad, mind that you are not idle at home. I would have you take every opportunity of adding to your stock of useful knowledge, for it will increase your own and others' happiness; but do not stop here, but go forward adding to your knowledge, "temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity;" for if these things be in you, you will neither be backward in doing the will of God, nor "barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." You will have grown in stature before I again see you, and I trust that you will have grown also in wisdom and grace; for without grace knowledge would be graven on your memory in vain. The wonders of creation, the achievements of art, and the varied inventions of mankind, are worthy of your thoughts; but as heaven is high above the earth, so is your eternal salvation above your temporal happiness: read then the word, and do the will of God. Humble yourselves under the