

EXCURSION ON THE QUEEN'S  
BIRTHDAY.

Thanks to the Queen's Birthday; it enables all and sundry, once a year, to take a cheap excursion, and so we determined to visit the Mines, and descend the pit. It will be now upwards of sixteen years since the writer had a similar experience; then it was the cage-pit, and our old friend John Robertson was our companion. In a basket we descended about five hundred feet into darkness, and there found an underground railway, works carried on and engines run by power from above. Our first sensations when alighting, and surprise, when crowded upon by youngsters craving a *bucksheish*, are yet vivid. Poor John! he was subsequently killed on the train to South Pictou by being crushed between two waggons, while in the discharge of duty, as faithful and obliging a servant as ever lived. But this time we had to descend the Foord pit almost one thousand feet, a feat accomplished as we were told in fifty seconds, then was there a suspension of breath? and the worst in being in a pit like this is that you are in prison and cannot escape any more than stop the uncoiling of the rope as you descend. It has to be taken in all its experience for good or evil like some other things in this life. Then we had to brace ourselves up to the effort. Strange that quite a number of persons around the Mines had never been below ground! Their courage or curiosity had failed them. But avoid the collieries, and what have you to show a stranger? Is it the twelve feet block of coal that forms the curiosity in Philadelphia exhibition from Nova Scotia. The lions in Pictou and New Glasgow are easily shown, but the Mines are the sight for visitors, and you must go down the pit. We were a party of four without recommendations, but we fortunately hailed

Mr. Hudson, the obliging manager, who showed us all we required above ground as Mr. Frazer showed us all below. The furnaces and immense pumps were inspected and thoroughly explained, then the machinery on the bridge, the tremendous wheel round which the thousand foot rope is constantly turning the telegraphic wire connecting with underground, indicating ingenuity and precision, the self-discharging waggons all claimed attention but then the descent! well American ladies are braver than Nova Scotians so without a fear, inwardly commending ourselves to God we took our seats. It is a curious sensation that one has descending through the darkness at so great a speed namely that *you are ascending*, however we reached the bottom in safety. I recollect a passage in Mr. Pollock's article in the RECORD some years ago, on his descending a pit that he lost sight of sublunary things, and Joe Howe was the last that faded from his mind, which shows how long the political lays hold on one's thoughts in this country, but our present visitors had better inspirations. How does the psalmist record that should he descend into hell, even there God would be found, and Jeremiah called upon His name out of the low dungeon. Here are occasions, O reader, in which you require to assure yourself of the Divine Protection, and this was one of these. "Then he drew near and said unto me, fear not." Thus is confidence established. But how can I undertake to narrate our underground experience. Our travelling under the bed of the river to one end of the pit where our fair visitors excavated coal for themselves, the counter balances up some of which we travelled, and the miles of rail along which horses with empty and full waggons were continually going, the chambers for the men's accommodation, and the stabling for the horses hewn out of the solid coal, sub-

(Concluded on last page.)