

now and again not so good. I always had it attended to. Brattice would be put up. I never had a complaint."

The mine-manager, Mr. Lindop, claims that the mines, as a whole, are the best ventilated in the world. They may be, and yet places may occur therein in which the air has been deficient. He says, "Everything possible has been done, and they have been favoured by nature—they bore out to daylight in numerous places." He says, "We have only forty miners on piece-work and eighty on wages; it is to our interest to ventilate well. There are 400 employés in all." He produces books signed by check-inspectors showing the ventilation to be satisfactory to the men; and certainly if there was a deficiency in ventilation, these check-inspectors, who are appointed by their fellow-workmen to protect their safety, are doubly blamable. We think that though there were occasions on which the air was comparatively bad, these were exceptional cases, such as a drive being taken to daylight, or a stenton being driven to a bord in a particular place, and that, as a whole, the ventilation for a good many years has not been seriously deficient. There is little excuse for deficient ventilation in these mines. It is true, as Mr. Lindop says, that they have been favoured by nature in facilities for ventilation; but it is also true that, as a rule, the safer the mine is naturally, the more careless the workers therein will be. We have seen a mine with a naturally good roof, requiring very little timber, absolutely unsafe, because that little was not supplied. We have seen mines difficult to ventilate amply supplied with air by artificial means, and natural facilities for ventilation do not always mean good air. At the time of our visit we found the air good and the ventilation satisfactory in every part of the mine. We found an ample supply of brattice-cloth erected where required.

*Charge of allowing Inexperienced Persons to have charge of a Coal-face.*—Whatever the form of this charge may be, we find that it is in fact an attack on the machine known as the "iron-man." This is a machine worked by compressed air, and is used for "holeing," or undercutting the face of coal, and it is found that men who have worked in quartz-mines and other mining-work are, after a few months' experience, at least as efficient in working this machine as men who have wrought long years in coal-mines and are prejudiced against the machines. The party who make the charge against the management cite one instance only of an accident occurring during the use of the machine. In that case a man named Hart was injured in August, 1900, through the coal coming away from the face after it had been holed or undercut by the machine. The accident was probably, if not certainly, due to deficient spragging. The injury did not turn out to be serious, the man being laid up for about a month. It is alleged that the accident arose through the ignorance of the man who was working the machine. This man was an experienced quartz-miner, and had worked in a coal-mine for eighteen months; but we are of opinion that the accident did arise from his neglecting the prescribed precautions in spragging. This is a fault which is not uncommon in experienced coal-miners, and some of these have, according to the evidence, been themselves prosecuted for negligence in spragging coal. Workmen in coal-mines, from the youngest boy to the oldest miner, have to be protected against their own carelessness. We think the charge as made is not proved by adducing one instance of neglect. Mr. Lindop, the manager, says, "The old miners are much opposed to the machines. We have tried them, but they refused to work the machines." We are of opinion that, with ordinary care, the machines are safer than the old way of holeing with a pick; but, again, we observe that the safer the conditions the more careless the men are, and accidents thus occur which might be prevented. This accident to Hart was the only accident which occurred during the three years the machines have been in use.

*Want of Two Separate Outlets to Mine.*—This charge is the same as that made against the Westport Cardiff Company, and we have dealt with it fully under that head. There is no foundation for it. There have always been two means of egress and ingress to the mines at Deuniston and Granity, and generally there are more than two, but men are not allowed to travel them unless in cases of emergency, for the reasons we have before stated. We think, however, that it should be made compulsory on mine-owners to have notice-boards pointing out "Way of Escape," and that periodically the men should be taken through these ways, so that they may know them when the emergency calling for their use arises.

*Closing Workings before all Coal extracted.*—This is a charge easy to make, but hard to prove or disprove. The interests of the mine-owners tend to induce the extraction of all the coal available, subject to the possibility of financial pressure and the state of the coal-market, inciting owners to skim over expensively worked portions of the mine, in order to get easily won coal of higher quality. We cannot rely much upon the opinions of the workmen, as opposed to those of the owners, on a question involving so many interests and much engineering skill. The covenant in the lease to the company is that "the lessees will work and manage the said mines in the most approved manner, and to the satisfaction of any Inspector of Mines appointed under "The Coal Mines Act, 1891," and so as to do as little injury as possible to the surface, and without committing or creating any waste or unnecessary loss of coal, and shall and will raise and draw the slack that may be gotten in the said mine, or so much thereof as may be necessary to preserve the said mine clean and not exposed to any danger or damage by fire."

It will, therefore, be seen that unnecessary waste or loss of coal would be a breach of covenant of the lease for which the lease might be determined by the Crown and possession resumed. The Inspector says: "The company carried out the workings in the Big Dip section to the best advantage. There is no get-at-able coal left in the Big Dip. The coal under dispute is a thin seam with stone bands in it, and not worth taking out. I have no authority to order the company to work any particular place. It was not possible to take out the remainder of the coal then. It had a tendency to damage the terrace and endanger the machinery. It will be possible to work it at any time, but it will not be worth working—it depends on the price of coal."

We see no reason to differ with this opinion of the Inspector. It is a most regrettable fact that, owing to faults, bands of stone and soft coal, a vast quantity of coal must be left until the price of coal has, through scarcity of supply, risen to almost famine prices, and thus made it