

Along with the wheeler and the collier there is the deputy, who examines the mine before the shift commences to see that it is all clear of gas. This individual has also other duties to perform, such as laying rails, cutting props to the right length, etc., etc.

Horse driving is another occupation. The driver takes the trucks through the mine in races, and deposits them in lay-bys, places similar to, and answering the same purpose as railway sidings. Here the trucks are received by the hangers-on, boys who attach the trucks to an endless rope, much on the cable car system. By this means then the coal goes forth to daylight and the world. It would take too much space to detail, so I have only named the most important stages in connection with the handling of the coal.

Considering that all this work has to be accomplished with the aid of only a small teapot-shaped oil lamp that hangs in the worker's cap, it is really wonderful that there is so little loss of life. Many fatal accidents, no doubt, occur from time to time, but in proportion to the dangers

incurred, the fatality list is comparatively small.

Though the average wage of the qualified miner is about ten shillings per day, taken as a whole his life is slavery in the highest degree. A man requires to be endowed with enormous physical strength to follow it, and unless he possesses the knowledge gained by long experience his pay will not be very remunerative.

The hours of toil, including the walk to and from work, give an average of some eleven hours a day, while the effects of excessive heat and damp have to be endured alternately. Often it is necessary, where the supply of air is insufficient, to work in a state of semi-nakedness. Men at work in these places sometimes suffer greatly, and even have to be carried out in a pitiful condition, gasping for breath. On the other hand, working in a dip drive with chasms in the roof that allow the surface water to come through will necessitate the constant use of a pump to allow the work to proceed, and will usually keep the men in a drenched condition from starting time till knock off.



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