

FRIGHTFUL ACCIDENT AT CLAY CROSS.

On Tuesday an accident of a most shocking nature happened at Clay Cross, near Chesterfield, at one of the collieries, by which one man was killed and two others injured, at least their lives are despaired of. The worse feature in the case is that the accident appears to have been brought about by the wilful conduct of the men themselves. It is necessary to explain that the coal is brought to bank in corves, the tackle connected with which is attached to the rope by a hook and ring, and lest the hook should by accident slip out of the ring it was also held by a piece of spun yarn. On Monday, the pits were idle, and early in the morning the engineman had been running the ropes up and down for the purpose of filling his boiler, and by some means the hook had slipped out of the ring, so that the corve was suspended simply by the piece of yarn. About nine o'clock three men named Simon and John Holmes (brothers, and who worked at the pit), and John Finney, came on the bank. They were told there was no work, and they were also told by the engineman not to attempt to descend the pit. Despite these cautions they proceeded to get into the suspended corve, but the third man had scarcely done so when the yarn rope broke and the three men were dashed to the bottom of the pit, a distance of 33 yards. Assistance was obtained, and a descent of the pit was made. Finney was found quite dead. The other two were alive, but dreadfully injured. Simon Holmes had his legs and arms broken, and John Holmes fared little better. They are all married men, with families. The men had been to a feast, and it is alleged that at the time of the accident they were not sober. The event has thrown quite a gloom over the neighbourhood, and much commiseration is felt for the sufferers and the family of the man that was killed.

An inquest was held at the house of Elias Smith, the Shakespeare Inn, Clay Cross, on Wednesday, before the coroner, (C. S. B. Busby, Esq.) an account of which we append:

Catherine Finney: I live in New Street, Clay Cross. The body viewed by the jury is that of my late husband, John Finney, coal miner, who died on Tuesday morning the 7th June, 1887, at the Dancemoor colliery, in the parish of North Wingfield, aged 22 years. He was killed at Messrs. Smith and Sheppard's pit.

The Coroner: I understand there are two other men seriously injured?

Inspector Fern: Yes sir, they are not likely to recover.

The Coroner said he should like to see one of the proprietors of the colliery.

Mr. Smith one of the proprietors was examined by the coroner and said: We are raising coal at this colliery. We have no rules although we have got to the coal and are raising it. We had arranged for some rules.

The Coroner: I don't want to hear anything more about it at present. I think under the circumstances that the other two men are not likely to recover and that Mr. Evans, the Government Inspector is not present, I will adjourn the inquest until Monday next.