MR. GLADSTONE IN SCOTLAND.

Mr. Gladstone arrived on his promised visit to Glasgow on Tuesday morning, and at once proceeded to the seat of the Lord Provost, at Lillybank, where Mrs. Gladstone, accompanied by her two daughters, had arrived on the previous evening from Porfarshire. After breakfast, the right hon. gentleman, with a distinguished party, went down the river to Erskinehouse, the seat of Lord Blantyre. In the evening the Lord Provost entertained at dinner a select company of the city and neighbourhood.

The Glasgow Reform Union.

The proceedings in connection with his visit commenced on Wednesday morning, with the presentation of an address from the Parliamentary Reform Union, in the Trades'-hall.

Mr. Graham, M.P., occupied the chair, supported by Mr. Dalglish, Mr. Lamont, M.P., the Lord Provost, Admiral Erskine, Mr. M'Ian, Mr. Cram-Ewing, M.P., &c.

Mr. Gladstone, who was received with enthusiastic cheers, said, in the course of his reply to an address from the Glasgow Reform Union, read by Mr. Moir: With regard to the great subject which forms the title to your Association, I beg you to put faith not so much in a man, not so much in a set of men, not so much in the chosen representatives of the people at any given moment as in the institutions and habits of the country (cheers). Whatever opinions are deeply felt, whatever convictions are widely and profoundly entertained, we may be assured, for we know it from a long and an extensive experience, these wants and these convictions will make their way to the surface—they will do themselves justice in the results of that free hearing and free discussion which every opinion from every quarter maintains among us, is sure to be—not perhaps as quickly as the more eager among us could desire, but yet if slowly, on that account all the more securely—a settlement conformable upon the whole to public justice. Without in the slightest degree attempting at the present moment to foreshadow or to forecast any method of proceedings—nay, even admitting the discouragement that may arise from the results of former events with regard to the particular subject of the franchise, with unbounded confidence I am persuaded that whenever Parliament shall find the opportunity of addressing itself to the consideration of that question, and will approach it in a spirit on the one hand of prudence, and on the other hand of manliness and courage, that the end which they will propose to themselves will be public justice; and they will seek, by any provisions they may incorporate in their law, neither to continue nor to set up, nor in any manner to favour, dominion or the undue influence of one class as compared with another; but in a fair adjustment of common rights and common interests, to make provision for their happiness and for the strength and prosperity of the country (loud cheers).

The proceedings terminated in cheers for Mr. Gladstone, the chairman, and Mr. Dalglish.

Presentation of the Freedom of the City.

Leaving the Trades'-hall at half-past one o'clock, Mr. Gladstone drove to the Central Cooking Depôt in Trongate; having inspected which, he proceeded to the City-hall, where the ceremony of presenting the right hon. gentleman with the freedom of the city was to take place. Every part of the hall was crowded. Mrs. and the Misses Gladstone, Lady Blantyre, and the Marquis of Lorn, occupied seats in the front gallery. On the platform were the magistrates and members of the council, Mr. Dalglish, M.P., Mr. Graham, M.P., Sir R. Colebrooke, Mr. Cram-Ewing, M.P., Mr. Merry, M.P., Captain Speirs, M.P., the Dean of Faculty, &c.

At two o'clock, Mr. Gladstone, accompanied by the Lord Provost, appeared on the platform, and was received with loud and continuous cheering.

The Lord Provost, in presenting the freedom of the city to the right hon. gentleman, referred to the distinguished services which Mr. Gladstone had rendered to the country, and the important changes which he had effected in our financial system for the relief of our home trade and manufactures.

An address having been read by the Town Clerk, the freedom of the city, enclosed in a massive silver box, was presented by the Lord Provost to the right hon. gentleman, who on receiving it warmly shook hands with the chief magistrate, and then turned to address the meeting, by whom he was received with loud and long-continued cheering. The honour conferred upon him, and for some moments there was an extraordinary display of enthusiasm, the ladies in the gallery waving their handkerchiefs and the gentlemen their hats. Silence having at length been restored,

Mr. Gladstone said: I need not tell you that it is with the liveliest and deepest feelings of satisfaction that I accept from your hands, my lord, the gift that you have been pleased to present to me, to be preserved, I hope, for many long years among the record and the treasures of my family (cheers). I have no doubt—indeed, I feel too well assured—that a critical judgment might find ample scope for remark upon the too flattering terms in which you have been pleased to advert to my public conduct; but still I presume to say that such acknowledgments as you are pleased to make, on occasions like the present, of the feeble and humble efforts of any individual to render services to his country are the choicest rewards that we can receive for the past, and the greatest encouragements and incentives, the greatest and most powerful aids, for the future (cheers). But such occasions lead us to review the position in which we stand, and to reflect upon that which has been and that which is to be; and I confess it might at first sight appear strange if, upon an occasion so joyous, when I have received at your hands an honour so deeply valued, I confess to you that a powerful, perhaps a predominant feeling in my mind at the present junction is a feeling of solitariness in the strangeness and in the career of public life (hear, hear). The Lord Provost has alluded briefly, but touchingly and justly, to the loss we have just sustained, and has intimated to you that this loss has been a loss that never, on the part of those who have taken place; but, indeed, the retrospect of the last five years is, in this regard, a touching and a melancholy retrospect. Sad, numerous, and wide have been the blanks which death has made in the ranks of our public men; and not alone of our official public men, for many in this country is the public man, many is the statesman, who renders true and vital service to the land, but who has never touched a public salary (cheers). Within these five years we have lost him whom I must name as the most illustrious in his position and his office, the beloved husband of our Queen, revered, admired, loved by all classes of the community, and one whose departure from his mortal home has left a void on Sovereign so dear to our hearts, and a loss that never, on this side of the grave, can be repaired (hear, hear). I pass from the Prince Consort to another name, widely, indeed, separated from him in social rank, but yet a name which is great at this moment in the annals of the country, and which will be for ever great in its annals—I mean the name of Richard Cobden (loud cheers)—that character so simple, so true, so brave, and so farseeing; a man who knew how to associate himself, at which he lived, and the deep interests of the community in which he lived, and to whom it was given to achieve, through the moral force of reason and persuasion, numerous triumphs that have made his name immortal (cheers). But if I look to the ranks of official life, perhaps it may cause even surprise, though we know that our losses have been heavy, when I say that my own recollection supplies me, and there may be more which that recollection does not suggest—that my own recollection supplies me with the names of no less than seventeen persons who have died within the last five years, and whose duty and privilege it had been to advise the Sovereign as members of the Government of this country (hear, hear). As to the last of these men—the distinguished man, whose loss at this moment the whole community, in every class and in every corner of the land, deeply and sincerely deplores—we have this consolation, that it has pleased the Almighty to afford him strength and courage which carried him to a ripe old age in the service of his country (hear, hear). Her Majesty, well aware of the heavy loss which we have sustained, and wisely exercising her high prerogative, has chosen from amongst the statesmen of the country Lord Russell to fill the place of Prime Minister (loud cheers). I know well the inclination of those whom I am addressing, and also of the whole community, to trust more to the evidence of facts than to that of words which may be idle and delusive (hear, hear); and I presume to say before you that the name of Lord Russell is in itself a pledge and a promise to a people (cheers). A man who fought for British liberty, for the institutions, and for its laws, but with a view to the strengthening of those laws—who has fought on a hundred fields for their improvement—lasting, and most likely now, when in his seventieth honourable year, to unlearn the lesson of his whole life, to change the direction of his career, and to forfeit the inheritance which he has secured in the hearts and memories of his countrymen (cheers). Therefore, my Lord Provost, I venture to think that the country has reasonable assurance in the name of the person who has for the second time assumed the responsibility of guiding the councils of the country with the aid of many experienced and distinguished persons whom I am happy to call my colleagues. I therefore hoop that the country has reasonable assurance that the same wise and enlightened spirit which has for the last thirty or sixty-five years distinguished in the main the policy of British legislation and the conduct of the executive Government, will still continue to be exhibited by those who will have the responsibility and direction of public affairs. I do not hesitate to say that the most painful, the most frequently recurring sentiments of public life, must, I think, be a sense of inadequacy of resources, inadequacy of physical strength, inadequacy of mental strength, in such an innumerable obligation. At the same time, that pain is not aggravated by a sense that our shortcomings are severely judged. We have much, indeed, to acknowledge with thankfulness, and, most of all, we have to delight in the reflection that the politics of this world are perhaps very slowly, with many hindrances, many checks, many reverses, yet that upon the whole they are gradually assuming a character which promises to be less and less one of aggression and violence, less and less one of violence and bloodshed; more and more one of general union and friendliness, more and more one connecting the common reciprocal advantages and the common interests pervading the world, and uniting together the whole great family of the human race, in a manner which befits rational and immortal beings owing their existence to one Creator, and having but one hope either for this world or the next.

Mr. Gladstone resumed his seat amidst great cheering. He subsequently visited the Exchange, where he was received enthusiastically by an immense throng within and without the walls of the building.

Address from the Working Men.

In the evening Mr. Gladstone was entertained at a private banquet by the Lord Provost, after which the right hon. gentleman, escorted by his hosts and guests, repaired to the Scotia-hall for the purpose of receiving an address from the working men of Glasgow. Mr. Dalglish, M.P., presided.

The right hon. gentleman, on entering the hall with Mrs. and Misses Gladstone and Lady Blantyre, was most enthusiastically received.

The Chairman briefly opened the proceedings, and said that the working men of Glasgow having, two years ago, presented an address to the great and popular minister whose death they were still deploring, they were now anxious to pay a similar compliment to the working men of the late Cabinet; reviewed the valuable measures which Mr. Gladstone had been instrumental in passing, which were doubly valuable for the benefits they would confer on the working classes; and expressed his belief that if he had been the son of a duke instead of a Liverpool merchant, there could be no doubt that at this moment he would have been at the head of the Government. But as Mr. Gladstone had consented to retain office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he could only congratulate them on still retaining his most valuable services in that important post (cheers). Mr. Wilkinson then read and presented the address.

Mr. Gladstone on coming forward was received with the warmest enthusiasm, the audience rising *en masse* and greeting him with vociferous cheering and the waving of hats. He said: Mr. Dalglish, Mr. Wilkinson, and gentlemen, be assured that I do not underrate the value of this address, neither, I hope, do I overrate the position and the powerful occupy in repect to it. This address contains much, gentlemen, and I have heard much in the speeches that have accompanied it, which I could not with a good conscience appropriate to myself. I am conscious that I am in a condition at the present moment the very reverse of that which sometimes is held by an unfortunate individual, who, when he happens to be detected in a particular fault, forthwith has laid upon him all the sins and all the faults of a dozen other particular kind that have ever been committed in the country (laughter and cheers). That, gentlemen, is what is called being made a scapegoat; and I have been made a scapegoat in a very opposite sense, because it appears to me that the great deeds of men who have preceded me, and men who have greatly exceeded me, appear to be so regarded in your minds as if I were myself to reap at this happy moment their undivided credit. Gentlemen, I ask for myself no such undivided credit. I presume to claim no distinction, and I could honestly draw no distinction, between myself and many more who have laboured as sincerely and more effectually in the same good cause (cheers).

The right hon. gentleman here entered into an eloquent and elaborate review of the progress of industrial enterprise, and the relations of capital and labour, after which he resumed his seat amidst great cheering.

Visit to Edinburgh.

Mr. Gladstone arrived in Edinburgh on Thursday morning, where he was received with considerable enthusiasm by the citizens who assembled in large numbers, notwithstanding a steady downpour of rain. The right hon. gentleman met at the Waverley Station by the Lord Provost (Mr. Lawson), and at two o'clock the ceremony of presenting a marble bust of Prince Alfred to the university took place in the great hall of the college library, in the presence of the principal and professors of the university, the Lord Justice General, the magistrates and members of the Town Council, and a number of other subscribers. Mr. Gladstone delivered his valedictory address as Rector of Edinburgh University on Friday. The subject chosen by him was "The Place of Ancient Greece in the Providential Order of the World."

THE GREAT TEMPERANCE CONFERENCE IN LONDON.

One of the most influential meetings ever held in connection with the total abstinence movement took place in London on Friday.

By invitation of the Lord Mayor a large company of gentlemen, numbering some 600, assembled in the Egyptian-hall, Mansion-house, to meet a deputation from the National Temperance Society and a Conference on the objects which that society have in view. The deputation consisted of Mr. Samuel Gurney, M.P., treasurer of the League, and the following vice-presidents:—Rev. Canon Babington, Rev. Alexander Hannay, Rev. Samuel Morley, M.P.; Mr. Benjamin Scott, Chamberlain of London; and Mr. George Cruikshank. There were also present the Lord Mayor (who presided), Mr. Sheriff Figgins, Mr. J. Richardson, C.C., Mr. J. Macrae Moir, Mr. Hartridge, C.C., Mr. Alf. Dewing, C.C., Mr. Deputy Lloyd, Professor Stowe Lewis, Deputy Assistant Judge Payne, Rev. Hugh Allen, Mr. Deputy Atkins, Rev. E. Auriol, Mr. R. Barrett, Mr. Charles Gilpin, M.P., Rev. J. B. Brown (Clapham), Rev. B. W. Bucke (in the chair), Rev. Thomas Bunce, Rev. G. W. M'Cree (Bloomsbury), Rev. Thomas Ness (Stepney), Mr. T. R. Phillips, C.C., Mr. T. Pillow, Mr. Dresser Rogers, C.C., Mr. Ayrton, M.P., Mr. Thomas Hughes, M.P., Rev. Newman Hall, Rev. Charles Spurgeon (Southwark), Rev. C. Kirkland (Secretary of the British Baptist Union), and Mr. Murphy (Lambeth). There were altogether present 79 Church clergymen, 111 Dissenting ministers, 71 physicians and surgeons, 62 aldermen, deputies, and other members of Common Council, and 93 magistrates, bankers, merchants, military and naval officers, and members of Parliament.

The Lord Mayor said that a short time back the highly-respected member for Nottingham, Mr. Morley, accompanied by a deputation from the great and important society in support of which they had met that evening, waited on him and asked for the use of the hall for this occasion. With very great pleasure he complied with the request, from a variety of motives. One was that as chief magistrate of the City, representing all the classes and the various sections of which the City was composed, he felt his duty to do so. He considered a temperance society had as much claim on him as any of those other societies which had some defined philanthropic object in view. That being the case he gave the use of the hall with much pleasure, and he wished the work in which the society was engaged every success. Whatever the public might think of the movement, they could not accuse those engaged in it of doing any harm. On the contrary, he hoped it would be well for our land if drunkenness was altogether banished from our shores. As a magistrate he had often seen the evil effects of intemperance. Parties had been brought before him from time to time, as well as before the various other magistrates, not only of the City, but the whole metropolis, and those parties fully exemplified the evils arising from drunkenness. He thought, therefore, it was the duty of all magistrates to do everything in their power to aid such a society as this. He thought that those who had banded themselves together to forward this movement, and who not only preached but practised the principles which they advocated, were deserving of the warm thanks of the community at large, and the assistance of all well-meaning persons. Entertaining as he did this opinion of the society, he was pleased to see as many present, and to preside on such an occasion (applause).

The secretary announced that, in addition to the large number of persons present, many letters had been received from gentlemen expressing their regret at not being able to attend the meeting. Among them were the Duke of Argyll, the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke of Grafton, Lord Clarendon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir George Grey, and the Lord Mayor elect.

Mr. S. Gurney, M.P., then came forward and said: My Lord Mayor, on behalf of the committee of the National Temperance League I ask you to accept our cordial thanks for convening this meeting; and to you gentlemen who have thus responded to the invitation our thanks are due. This is not the first time, my Lord Mayor, that you have assisted and encouraged the cause of temperance. Your name is therefore still fresh in our remembrance and our hearts, when at the commencement of your mayoralty you presided over that large and important gathering in the Guildhall, which proved one of the most useful meetings ever held to further temperance cause (hear, hear). Nor is this the first time we have met in this noble hall. In the mayoralty of the late excellent Mr. Cubitt, a meeting of a more public character was held in this hall, which was in every way successful and valuable, and now, my Lord Mayor and gentlemen, I will in brief explain the principles and mode of action of the association on whose behalf we have met this evening. Our great object is to counteract the manifold evils of intemperance from which no class of society is exempt. These evils develop themselves in crime, pauperism, disease, insanity and idiocy, neglect of religious instruction and Divine worship, ignorance and neglect of families and ill-treatment of women, and in other forms, which meet us at every step and retard and obstruct all existing agencies for the good of the people. If the evils of intemperance are more apparent and more rapidly developed amongst the working classes, yet we must not suppose that they are the only transgressors. Intemperance has no class, however exalted, no profession, however sacred, that has not furnished its victims; and in such cases the fall is the greater, the degradation the deeper, and the area of suffering the wider. No other vice involves so many ramifications of evil as intemperance (hear, hear). Nor can we expect that any one class can alone successfully struggle against the causes of intemperance and the habits by which it is induced. If our efforts to combat this evil are to be crowned with success it can only be by the combined action of all classes; and it is in furtherance of this view that the present meeting has been convened. What we are thus seeking to accomplish is but an extension of what has already been done. The remedy proposed is the total abstinence, present and future, is entire abstinence from all intoxicating liquors (hear, hear). What we preach we have first practised, and this practice has its representatives in all ranks and professions (cheers). In the working classes, in commerce, manufacturing, have adopted it in large numbers, and again, it has been adopted by tradesmen, country gentlemen, merchants, and manufacturers. The army and navy and the merchant service have of late years risen in the cause, and it is a thing to cheer force (hear, hear). This is especially the case in the army, where the rank and file have been supported by the example of officers of high rank and reputation in the service (hear, hear). In the Church, former prejudice has given way in a most remarkable manner, hundreds of clergymen and ministers of religion observe the rule of total abstinence (hear, hear). This combination of classes against the prevalent drinking customs of our country is the great object towards which this Conference is aiming. In this we encourage and assist local temperance societies in holding public meetings. We have also special meetings in the establishments of some of the principal firms in this City, by which we reach those firms more of this great City. Conferences with merchants, employers of labour, the clergy, and other influential persons, have been frequently held in the metropolis and suburbs, and in many of the principal towns in the kingdom. We have also had a few such conferences and meetings of this kind have been held. During the sitting of the British Association at Birmingham upwards of 300 of the members accepted an invitation to breakfast, and to meet the president of this association. Mr. Bovill, and other gentlemen, upon the temperance question (hear, hear). In like manner the members of the Wesleyan Conference, held this year at Birmingham, met a deputation from the League; and more recently at Bristol the members of the Congregational Union, the deputations have visited and held meetings in the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and in all the principal theological colleges and training schools for teachers in the kingdom (hear). At Oxford the undergraduates formed a University Temperance Society. Conferences with the schoolmasters of the National and British School systems have been held, which have led to many effective lectures being given to the scholars of British and National schools, and we have met at Wavertree, upon to us in this direction, if we had but the means fully to occupy it. The great importance of imbuing the minds of children with temperance sentiments is acknowledged by all; and this brings us to the numerous juvenile temperance societies, or "Band of Hope," which are more immediately under the care of a kindred institution—the Band of Hope Union—on whose behalf a large meeting was held yesterday evening in Exeter-hall, under the presidency of one of our metropolitan members of Parliament, Thomas Hughes, Esq. (hear, hear). In the army, successful temperance operations have been carried on at the Curragh Camp, at Aldershot and Warley, Weedon, Birmingham, and other large garrisons; also at Portsmouth, Sheerness, Chatham, and at the Wellington Barracks, and the Tower. At Warley, over a period of three years, about 2,500 soldiers signed the pledge, and upwards of 1,000 at Woolwich in the same period (hear, hear). These operations have extended to the colonies and the army—in India, Malta, Gibraltar, Corfu, the Cape, Hong-Kong, &c. In the port of London a temperance missionary and colporteur is permanently engaged. One year's work comprises 230 meetings, 63 of which were on board of ships; 4,199 visits to vessels in the docks and river; the sale and distribution of a large number of Bibles and religious and temperance books and tracts; and 444 persons had been induced to sign the pledge. This agency might be extended to great advantage. Temperance operations are a wide field for the agency of Christian women, as shown in the successful labours of Mrs. Bayly, Mrs. Wightman, and other ladies. Working men's clubs, as an offshoot of temperance work, are most valuable and effective. Working men's clubs, we work also through the press—the newspaper press, the periodical press, by tracts, and the more permanent volume. Temperance literature is now very extensive and varied, and its circulation much on the increase. This brief sketch of our operations is necessarily incomplete, but it will be sufficient to prove that the temperance enterprise is a reality, a living active agency, permeating society from its lowest strata upwards. And the spirit in which we desire to do this work is that of love and Christian charity, by the force of example, and the power of sympathy (hear, hear). And we appeal to you for help. If there seems involved in our mode of action some self-sacrifice there is abundant compensation in the satisfaction and the laughter of all pleasures which are enjoyed by those engaged in a good work (cheers). May we all take to heart the lesson taught by Dean Stanley last Sunday in Westminster Abbey, including us in our different sphere to continue work for, and persevering devotion to, the public good, founded on the exhortation of the Apostle, "See that ye walk circumspectly, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore, be ye not unwise, but understanding what is the will of the Lord" (hear). In view of the tremendous consequences of intemperance to its victims in this life and in the life to come, we shall do well earnestly to desire "to redeem the time, and to understand what the will of the Lord is" (cheers).

Mr. S. S. Morley, M.P., next addressed the meeting, and said he believed it was impossible to deny that drunkenness was in this country, and among the mass of our population, the great source of crime and poverty. The habit of drinking stood in the way of every attempt to ameliorate the condition of our working classes. The Temperance League wanted to make the people happier—they wanted to help them to help themselves—by persuasion, by loving sympathy, by showing them by personal example that the use of intoxicating drinks was not necessary to health or comfort (hear, hear). He was quite willing to take his share of the obloquy and ridicule which were showered down upon the advocates of total abstinence from those drinks, and he was sustained in the course he had pursued by his knowledge that he had himself been the instrument of making many individuals happier by inducing them to adopt that principle. They had at least a right to ask those who differed from them to point out some better mode than that which they advocated of attaining what was manifestly a most desirable object (hear, hear). He could show that hundreds of homes were rendered desolate by drunkenness; he could show that from the same cause hundreds of hearts—the hearts of women and mothers—were breaking (hear, hear). It was computed that £80,000,000 were annually expended in the purchase of intoxicating drinks in this country; that two-thirds of that sum came from the pockets of the working classes, and that to drunkenness was to be attributed nine-tenths of the crimes committed among us. Every one, however, would admit that the use of intoxicating liquors was productive of enormous evils, and the real question was what was the remedy to be adopted in that case. Many persons wished for the aid of direct legislation; but he confessed that he had no confidence in any such remedy in the last extremity, to legislative interference in dealing with this evil; and he had great faith in the efficacy of moral agencies (hear, hear). He believed that what was most wanted was the use of a more frequent and earnest appeal to the intelligence and the good feeling of the working classes, and a greater intercourse between the rich and the poor (hear, hear). He had always found that a great effect was obtained when educated men spoke to working men as they were doing what they wanted them to do (hear, hear). He believed that was an essential condition of success in the advocacy of temperate habits. The poor disliked dogmatism, while they readily opened their ears and hearts to be influenced by such personal example. He was not prepared to denounce moderate drinkers; but he believed that those who, in the spirit of self-sacrifice and in order to sustain others who stood in need of the assistance, adopted the total abstinence pledge, were performing a good work, and were conferring an important advantage on the whole race of mankind (cheers).

The Rev. A. Hannay, Mr. Samuel Bowly, Mr. Scott (Chamberlain of London), Mr. Webster, Q.C., Mr. George Cruikshank, Mr. Murphy (Lambeth), the Rev. S. Eardley, and General Sir R. Dacres having addressed the meeting, all approving of the temperance movement, a vote of thanks was passed to the Lord Mayor, and the company separated.

TERRIBLE GAS EXPLOSION AT NINE-ELMS

Serious Loss of Life.

About ten minutes past two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon the residents in the districts of Nine-elms, Battersea, and the Wandsworth and Lambeth-roads, were thrown into a state of great alarm by a loud explosion, accompanied by a succession of reports like claps of thunder. The window-panes of many houses were shivered to atoms, and the people rushed out into the streets in the greatest state of alarm, the general belief being that an earthquake had taken place. On the smoke, with which the air was full, partly clearing away, those in the immediate neighbourhood became aware that one of the large gasometers on the premises of the Metropolitan Gas-works, had exploded, and that gas in a second gasometer had ignited, and was burning with great rapidity, throwing high up into the air immense volumes of flame. The works were in full operation at the time, several hundred men being variously employed at the retorts, furnaces, testing-houses, &c., and the officials were all at their usual posts; but the suddenness of the explosion, and its extent, paralysed for some minutes every one on the premises. As soon as they had recovered from the shock, some of the workmen from all parts was made towards the scene of destruction, which was of the most terrible character, to see what aid could be rendered by them. As soon as the smoke and steam had somewhat cleared away, it was found that the gas-meter No. 1, situate nearest to the Battersea-road, and which had been fully charged with 1,000,000 cubic feet of gas for the night consumption, was a heap of ruins, the iron roof and girders, as well as the brick-work, being literally twisted into bags, and twisted into all conceivable forms and shapes. Nothing could convey a stronger idea of the violence of the explosion than the bent and twisted forms of these large masses of iron. Immediately in the rear of this gasometer was another, which, though it had been erected, at which a number of workmen were employed at the time of the explosion. Of this meter-house scarcely a brick was left standing, and masses of brickwork and heavy timber had been pushed twenty, thirty, and forty yards from the place. The walls, windows, and doors of the testing-houses, the carpenters' and other workshops, on the other side of the yard, were blown in, and the whole of their contents heaped together in confusion, and scattered in all directions. In the horror and confusion of the scene, it was at the same time discovered that gasometer No. 2, situate about 100 yards from that which had blown up, and which was also fully charged with gas, had caught light, and was momentarily expected to explode. The force of the shock was surrounded with the retort houses and other manufacturing houses, had this been the case the whole plant of the establishment would have been destroyed. Fortunately, however, the gas burnt itself off without any further explosion.

After a few minutes, the clamour and confusion having a little subsided, the attention of the officials and men belonging to the establishment was directed to the state of the workmen who were at the time of the explosion at work in the meter-house. About twenty of the poor fellows were found lying half buried in the rubbish, suffering from severe contusions, scalds, burns, and other injuries. These were at once extricated, and taken off in the gas-co's-part Ambulance to Wandsworth-road. In the course of ten minutes six bodies were dug out of the rubbish, and deposited in the porter's lodge. They were all horribly cut and disfigured about the head and face, to such an extent as to prevent their being recognised. Mr. Jones, Mr. Short, and Mr. Pimlico Dispensary, Dr. Sutcliffe, and Dr. Leslie, medical men in the neighbourhood, rendered such assistance to the sufferers as lay in their power, as, one by one, they were removed from the ruins. While this terrible scene was being enacted on the premises of the gas company, the entrance gates to which had been closed against the large concourse of people who had assembled outside a few minutes after the catastrophe, that outside was scarcely less so, with the exception of the loss of life, of a similar character, that could be ascertained. Two streets of neat and newly-erected houses, named Horwood-street, and Radley-terrace, each containing about twenty-four houses, inhabited by respectable working men, run parallel with the gas company's premises. Every house in these streets has its doors and windows smashed in, its roof stripped off, and the whole of the furniture destroyed or seriously damaged by the force of the explosion. Several of the inmates, chiefly at the back of the premises, were more or less seriously injured by the splinters of wood and pieces of glass forcibly ejected into their sitting-rooms, and several medical gentlemen were busily occupied during the afternoon in dressing their wounds. Scarcely a house in a mile extent was scarcely a house with a whole pane of glass left in it, and the street lamps have all been broken. Of the twenty men taken to St. Thomas's Hospital, and attended to by Mr. Clark, house surgeon, Mr. Sydney Jones, and Mr. La Gro Clark, eight were enabled to proceed to their homes, but twelve were suffering from injuries so severe as to necessitate their being immediately placed in the accident ward. They are all suffering from compound fractures of the limbs, scalds, and burns. About five o'clock two of the sufferers expired, making, at present, nine known deaths as the result of the explosion. The names of those lying at the hospital are—J. Harris, J. Cox, J. E. Sherwen, L. Collins, or Cummins, T. Bush, S. Smith, P. Shea, W. Newman, G. Swales, J. Sullivan, W. Dunton, and E. Magrath.

On Thursday another of the unfortunate sufferers by the explosion, lying at St. Thomas's Hospital, expired from the severe injuries he had received. His name is John Cox, and his injuries were a fractured head and spine. All the other men are reported as going on favourably. The total number of deaths by the accident is now ten. The directors of the Gas Company have notified to the wives and families of the deceased and injured men that their wants will be attended to by the company, and everything possible will be done to alleviate their distress. Nothing transpired at the directors' meeting on Wednesday positively to account for the accident, but it is generally admitted that the first explosion took place in the meter-house from leakage.

Nearly the whole of the damage done by the explosion is in the direction the wind was blowing at the time, the mischief in the opposite line being comparatively trifling. The clock at the works was smashed in, and has now motionless hands on its dial point conclusively to the time of the catastrophe, nine minutes after two o'clock. One sufferer was saved from death by an immense beam that was just upon falling upon his prostrate body, but lodged by one end against a wall or other obstacle. By the roller of this formed the victim was sheltered till got out and saved.

The inquest upon the ten unfortunate men killed by the above explosion, was opened on Friday morning in the board-room, before Mr. Carter, coroner for East Surrey.

Mr. Besley, barrister, instructed by Messrs. Maynard and Co., appeared on the part of the company; and Mr. Bickley, solicitor, of Field-house, Larkhall-lane, on behalf of the relatives of some of the sufferers.

The jury having assembled, the coroner stated that as the inquiry into the accident would probably be somewhat minute, and the inquest would necessarily have to be adjourned, all that he proposed to do on the present occasion was to identify such of the bodies as were here, then to take evidence of the nature of the construction of the building, and to obtain such descriptions of them as the witnesses could give, after which he should ask the jury to accompany him to St. Thomas's Hospital, and to identify the bodies lying there. He should then propose to adjourn for a few days in order that the inquiry might be as to the cause of the explosion might be forthcoming.

Mr. Besley said that he had been instructed by the solicitors of the London Gas Company to watch the proceedings, and he took this opportunity of saying that the officers of the company were extremely desirous of affording every facility for the fullest investigation of this lamentable accident. With that view they had given instructions to have a correct model of the building prepared, which would probably greatly assist the jury in understanding the evidence.

In reply to a question from the Coroner,

Mr. Besley added that the model in question would be ready in four or five days.

The Coroner suggested to the jury whether, in that case, it would not be advisable at present to confine the evidence simply to the identification of the bodies.

Mr. Bickley quite concurred in the course suggested, being of opinion that the production of such a model would greatly assist the investigation of the inquiry.

The coroner and jury then proceeded to view the bodies, and on their return to take the evidence of identity with respect to the seven bodies lying at the works, after which witnesses were called to prove the identity of the bodies lying at St. Thomas's Hospital, and the coroner proceeded with the jury to view the bodies at the hospital.

The inquest was then adjourned to the 9th of November.

A meeting on behalf of those unfortunate sufferers who have lost husbands, brothers, and fathers by the explosion took place on Friday evening, at St. George's Parsonage, Battersea. The Rev. R. Cassin, the incumbent, whose indefatigable efforts have already effected so much good in behalf of those afflicted persons, presided, and was ably supported by the vicar of Battersea, the Rev. J. S. Jenkinson. Drs. Leslie, Sutcliffe, and Messrs. Wallace, Gavin, Tweddell, &c., were present. Mr. Chairman stated that he had already received £180 12s., and that the most liberal contributions had come in.

DESTRUCTION OF A RAILWAY BRIDGE.

An accident of a very alarming and peculiar nature occurred at Hartlepool on Thursday afternoon. On the route of the connecting line of railway from Hartlepool to West Hartlepool there is a bridge composed of wood and iron which stretches over the entrance to the Slakes, and it is supported by metal columns, the supporters of which some time ago were noticed as having been carried away by a raft of timber. On one side of the bridge, the supporters, and on the other a drawbridge over which the general traffic between the two towns is conveyed. The entrance to the Slake faces the harbour, and, as the tide runs in with great velocity, sometimes at the rate of 10 miles an hour, the force of water, with the links about two feet in circumference is drawn across to prevent injury to the bridge by the shipping. Notwithstanding the ponderous nature of the barrier, which guarded the entrance, it yielded to the force of a sailing vessel, was carried by the current against it, which occasioned the damage and peril we now have to report. It appears that about one o'clock on Thursday afternoon, when the tide was flowing rapidly, the brig Allison, Captain Yell, of Hartlepool, was being removed from one of the tiers in the harbour to the ballast crane. Every precaution was taken by the captain and the running-fitter aboard to escape being carried away by the current, and to prevent injury to the bridge and vessel. After the vessel had proceeded some distance across the harbour the rope from the schooner was "let go," and the ship was then caught by the current. The sudden strain upon the rope was too much, and it gave way, and the ship went stern first into the entrance. The chain, which was below water, snapped, and the vessel dashed into the bridge with great force, smashing away the passengers' footpath from one end to the other, throwing the framework over on to the railway, dislodging the bed of the railway, which appeared only to be supported by the line of rails, which were bent semicircular, and breaking both the massive cog-wheels which are connected with the machinery for raising the drawbridge. The accident occurred shortly after the passenger train from West Hartlepool had crossed over the bridge, and on its return, about a quarter of an hour after, it was fortunately stopped just as it arrived at the scene of the casualty. The passengers were all taken to West Hartlepool, and it is expected it will be a fortnight before traffic can be resumed on the line, which will prove a great inconvenience to the people of both towns. A steamboat was got to pull the ship out of the entrance, but it was found that, owing to the current was so strong, but another coming to her assistance, she was pulled out and moored against the quay. The damage done to the ship is not considerable. She is the property of Messrs. Watkin and Towers, Rowell-street, Hartlepool.—*Leeds Mercury.*

SINGULAR ACCIDENT ON THE GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY.

On Thursday night a singular and exciting accident occurred at the terminus of the Great Northern Railway at King's-cross, which nearly resulted fatally in one instance and might have proved much more serious than it has. A goods train of 30 coal trucks was passing through the Copenhagen Tunnel, when the greater portion of the trucks, without the knowledge of either engine-driver or guard, became detached. The tender, with the few remaining trucks, continued the journey into the goods station, and into the coal depôt at King's-cross, and the signalman, supposing the whole of the coal train had arrived, signalled the line clear. Meanwhile, the detached trucks, which had been left behind, had at the commencement of an incline, gradually increased in momentum, and dashed along at a tremendous pace. Upon emerging into the light, the guard in the break van at the rear of the trucks discovered the accident had happened and immediately applied the break, but notwithstanding this the trucks dashed rapidly into the terminus at King's-cross, instead of turning off to their proper destination at the coal depôt. At this juncture the guard, perceiving the inevitable consequences, leaped on to the platform and saved himself from injury. The trucks, continuing their career, dashed right through the station, partly broke down and partly leaped the barrier at the end, ploughed through the enclosed ground adjoining, knocked down and destroyed the fencing separating the company's property from St. Pancras-road, and precipitated themselves into the thoroughfare, where the foremost knocked down and seriously injured the son of the gatekeeper at the Great Northern. Fortunately, however, they not meet the full force of the trucks, or he must have been crushed to atoms. The lad was immediately conveyed to the Gray's-inn Hospital. The noise made by the accident was most deafening and terrific, and a vast concourse of people speedily assembled. The foremost truck had overturned in the roadway, and several trucks had overturned within the enclosure, their wheels being wrenched off. All along the line for some hundred yards or more the rails were completely blocked by the trucks and coal.

Image included with thanks to the National Library of Wales