

FATAL MINE DISASTER.

A CAVE-IN FOLLOWED BY AN EXPLOSION OF FIREDAMP.

SCRANTON, Penn., July 24.—The Central Colliery of the Delaware, Lackawanna and Western Railroad Company in the western section of Scranton, was the scene of a double disaster today, the first being an extensive cave-in, which occurred at 5 o'clock this morning, doing great damage to surface property and destroying many dwellings, and the second an explosion of firedamp, which took place this afternoon, killing two miners outright and seriously injuring five others. The killed are Robert Roberts, aged forty-two, and John Williams, aged twenty-three. The injured are Patrick Barrett, Thomas James, Benjamin James, John Doyle, Robert Moran, and Robert Lewis.

The owners of the Central mine have recently been "robbing pillars," which consists in removing the coal supports that were left to sustain the roof when the work of mining was carried on several years ago, and as a result the surface has been caving in.

This morning's cave-in extended over nearly three blocks in the neighborhood of Luzerne-street and adjacent thoroughfares and was unusually severe. It startled the people from their beds at 5 o'clock and many ran in terror from their homes, which were badly shaken by the upheaval. The walls of several houses were ripped open, others were moved from their foundations, and in the lawns and gardens were numerous fissures extending a considerable distance.

The surface was "working" at 5 o'clock this afternoon, when a new report was added to the morning's excitement by the rumor that several lives had been lost by a firedamp explosion in the depth of the mine, 300 feet below the surface, where a gang of men were at work.

This alarming news caused the most intense and painful apprehensions for a time, until the facts became known. The explosion occurred at about 3 o'clock. The workmen were in the main gangway removing rails and other railroad property out of the path of the subterranean storm. The air current was good when they began work, but as the caving-in process progressed it gradually forced the volume of air damp upon them until it came in contact with their mine lamps and produced a terrific crash.

The force of the explosion was distinctly felt on the surface and blew the whistle in the engineer's room at the headhouse. When the engineer answered it he met with no response and then realized that something fearful had happened.

Roberts and Williams, who were instantly killed, were buried beneath a great heap of rocks and coal, and their companions were so hemmed in by the big boulders which fell about them that two hours elapsed before they could escape from their prison. Barrett and Doyle were first to get out, and they soon obtained assistance to rescue the others and remove the bodies of the two men who had been killed by the explosion.