

# “The Disaster at The Crarae Quarries” (Scotland)

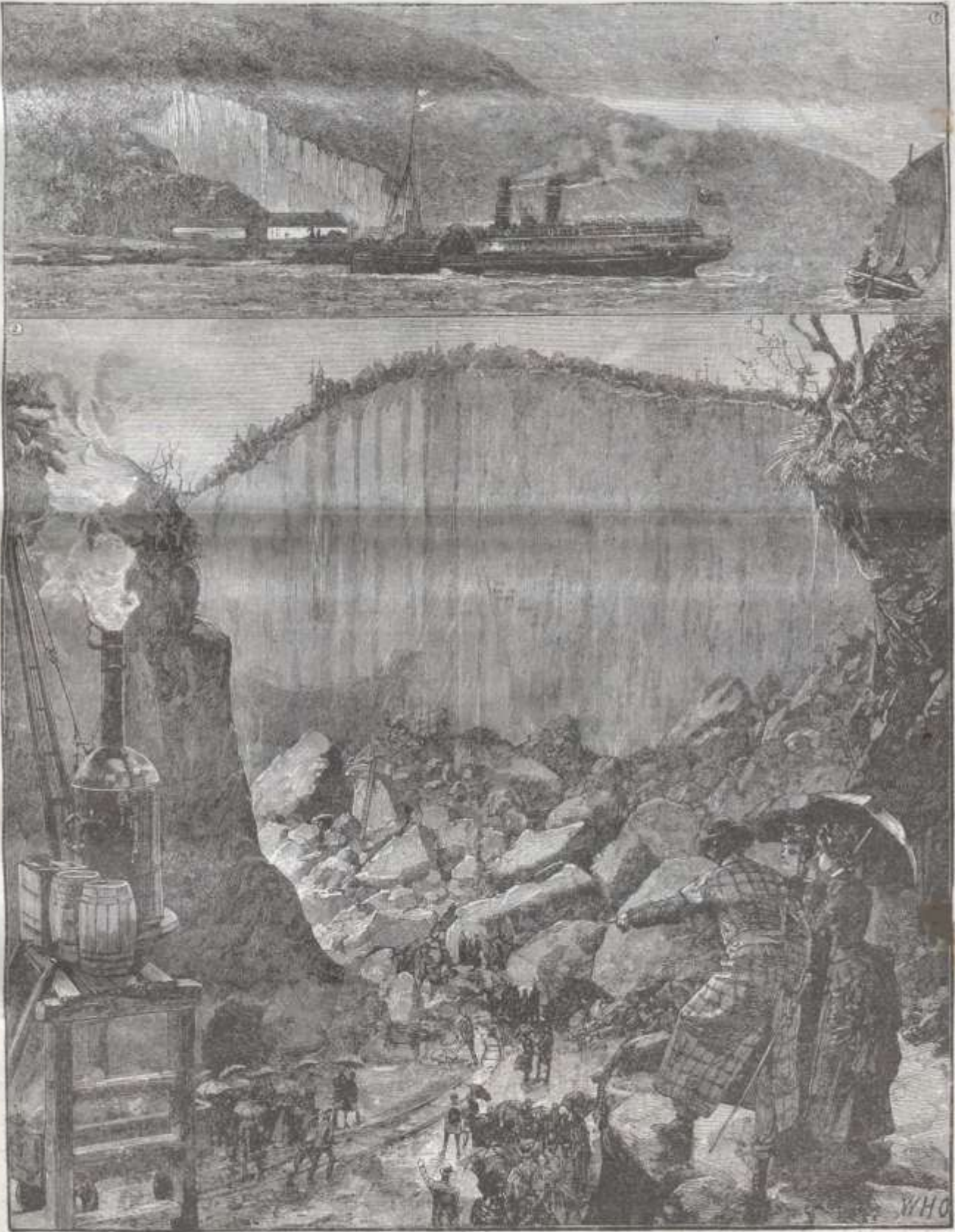
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1. The quarry, looking from the lake. 2. Interior of the quarry.

CRARAE QUARRY, LOCH FYNE, SCOTLAND.—SCENE OF THE LATE REMARKABLE ACCIDENT.

**1. The quarry, looking from the lake. 2. Interior of the quarry.**

(The above picture was originally published in the London *Graphic*, according to this article.)





**1. Crarae Quarry from the Loch. 2. Passengers watching the blast from the Lord of Isles.  
3. Quarrymen bringing out the bodies. 4. The rush from the quarry.**

(The above picture was originally published in *The Illustrated London News*, according to this article.)

“On Saturday, September 25, according to annual custom, a company numbering upward of 1,000 persons, and including several members of the Glasgow Corporation, their wives and families, proceeded on board the Lord of the Isles steamer to Loch Fyne, to witness the great blast at the Crarae quarries. The quarries are situated on the face of a hill, rising 150 ft. perpendicularly from the loch. The steamer gave the signal for the explosion by blowing her whistle. Seven tons of powder were fired, and seventy thousand tons of rock were dislodged. It was reckoned a most successful blast, and thus far all went well. But then the passengers were anxious to land and inspect the scene of operations. Some three hundred of them did so, and all who could squeeze in entered the quarry. At first nothing untoward happened, but after a few

minutes one visitor after another fell motionless to the ground, overpowered by the noxious vapors which the explosion had generated. A quarryman had, it seems, given them warning of their danger, but his words were either misunderstood or disregarded. Nearly a hundred persons were thus prostrated, and of these seven died on the spot, while others remained in a critical condition for several days. It is remarkable that the mephitic vapors did not begin to ooze out from the crushed rock until some time after the blast. This no doubt lulled the visitors into a false sense of security. The above, together with our first page cut, is from the London *Graphic*. Our second picture is from *The Illustrated London News*, which gives the following: The singular accident that proved fatal to seven persons, three or four of them well-known citizens of Glasgow, Saturday, Sept. 25, has been briefly noticed. It occurred at the Crarae quarries, on the west shore of Loch Fyne, a few miles below Inverary; which are the largest in Scotland, and supply the best granite for street paving. They are the property of Messrs. W. Sim and & Co., and are leased by Messrs. A. & J. Faill & Co., Glasgow, contractors. It has been the yearly custom to have a great blast at the quarries, the quantity of gunpowder used increasing to above six tons on recent occasions. The Corporation of Glasgow are the largest customers of the lessees. The Lord Provost of Glasgow and the members of the Corporation were always invited guests, and excursionists from all parts of the west of Scotland came to witness the spectacle.

“On the 25<sup>th</sup> of Sept., the Clyde steamer Lord of the Isles brought a company of a thousand and a pleasant passage was enjoyed down the river through the Kyles of Bute and up Loch Fyne.

“The quarries are situated on the face of a hill, which rises almost perpendicularly from the edge of the loch to a height of about 150 ft. The blast was prepared to a height of about 150 ft. The blast was prepared by a chamber being bored in the face of the rock at a distance of 30 ft. from the water level, and extending inward 60 ft., with branch chambers of 20 ft. each in length to the left and right, starting from the innermost point of the main chamber. These cavities were filled with the charge, which was exploded by electricity. The steamer arrived off the quarries shortly after one o’clock, and was brought up a mile from the shore. The signal for the explosion was given by the steamer sounding her steam whistle. The charge of seven tons of powder was immediately fired; in less than a minute the whole face of the quarry heaved outward, between sixty and seventy thousand tons of rock being dislodged, the operation proving quite successful. Part of the company, about three hundred, then landed to inspect the quarry, accompanied by the proprietor, Mr. W. Sim, the lessees, Messrs. A. & J. Faill, and the manager, Mr. Sharp. A few minutes after entering the quarry, they were affected by the fumes of carbonic acid gas and sulphurous oxide, remaining from the explosion of the gunpowder, and still pouring out from the crannies and recesses, and from under the loose fragments of shattered stone. More than eighty persons fell prostrate, mostly insensible, and six gentlemen died on the spot. The others, being removed as quickly as possible, and carried back by the steamer, gradually revived in the fresh air, except one, who died at the Greenock Infirmary. The following is the list of the killed: Councilor John Young, Glasgow; Councilor Thomas Duncan, Glasgow; Mr. Matthew Waddell, City Restaurant, Glasgow; Mr. Steel, jeweler and electro-plater, Ann Street, Belfast; Mr. Peter Stevenson, optician, Forest Road, Edinburgh; Mr. James Shaw, son of Councilor Shaw, Glasgow; Mr. Small, Dalry, Ayrshire.

“The above strange occurrence has been paralleled in this country by the accident recorded in the next paragraph.

*(Continued on the next page)*

## **A Remarkable Railway Accident**

“A recent accident at Perkasio, Pa. (Pennsylvania), tunnel shows the importance of their ventilation. The above tunnel is about half a mile long. Repairs are being made therein. On the 3d inst. Some fifty men were at work near the center of the tunnel, when a freight engine, unable to draw its train through the tunnel, became ‘stalled’ near the place where the men were at work. Fresh coal was put in the locomotive furnace, and the fan blast set in motion. Soon the train started, when it acted as a piston in a cylinder, driving the gases from the furnace before it; and when the gases struck the men who were working in the tunnel, they nearly all fell as if dead. With no premonition, about forty of them became almost instantly unconscious, and fell as they stood.

“One of the men, only partially affected, made his way to the tunnel entrance and gave the alarm. A gravel train, with flat cars, happened to be standing there. It was run in to the place of the accident, and the bodies of the fallen men were dragged upon the cars and taken out to the fresh air. All were supposed to be dead, but, to the surprise of the rescuers, the recently dead men soon began to show signs of life, and in a short time all were themselves again, except one poor fellow, who died, and who, in his fall, sank into a pool of water, and probably was drowned.

“One of the unconscious men was found hanging on a ladder, head downward, suspended by his feet.”