

THE COAL MINING INDUSTRY IN LANARKSHIRE.

THE scenes depicted in the illustrations on this page are familiar enough to thousands who toil in the mines, but many who live even in Lanarkshire are quite unaware of the various methods adopted

underground for the securing of that mineral on which mainly depends the industry and wealth of this populous County. A few observations on mining may therefore be acceptable.

First, as to the seams: these are numerous, they lie at varying depths, and produce coal of different qualities. Good house coal is got from the Ell, the Main, the Virgin, and the Virtue-well seams. These lie from 112 to 160 fathoms beneath the surface, and the last gets its name from its having been discovered at a well possessing medicinal virtues at the Thrash Bush of Airdrie. The seams that produce coal for furnace and gas-work purposes are the Pyotshaw and Splint.

The systems employed in "getting" the coal are known as the "Stoop and Room" system, and the "Long Wall" system. The former is so called because galleries or roads, technically known as "Room," are made round great pillars (stoops) some 60 or 70 yards square. These stoops are removed right ahead, or they are taken out after the limits of the mine have been reached, and their removal is often a dangerous task. The second system, which is being adopted to the exclusion of the first, consists simply in driving ahead through the seam. A road is thus formed, and the coal is taken out straight away as it is hewn.

The working tools of a collier, known as his "graith," consist of the well-known pick, shovel, "mell," rake, wedges, drills, and boring apparatus; to their aid is brought the use of explosives for blasting.

The first illustration on this page shows the working at the "face" (i.e., the actual coal seam where hewing is going on); the miner to the left is "holing" and "kiring" in order to excavate beneath the seam. His mate is boring in order to insert explosives. After the fall has taken place the coal is carried in hutches to the pitbottom. Every miner takes down with him a number of "checks," or "pins," or "tokens," to distinguish his own hutches from

those of his fellows. One of these checks is fastened to each hutch of hewn coal, and this check indicates the worker to whom its weight is to be credited. Every hutch passes before the pitheadman and the checkweighman at the pithead. The checkweighman is appointed

by the miners in their interests, and his record must tally with that of the master's representative—the pitheadman. Their books duly transmitted to the office constitute the basis of pay.

Mines are regularly inspected by Government officials, and it is perhaps not generally known that any miner may write anonymously to the inspector to call his attention to anything unsatisfactory in the workings. The inspector must visit

after such notice, and even though the notice is signed, the signature is not disclosed to the responsible managers of the colliery.

