

NITRO-GLYCERINE EXPLOSION.

An explosion which took place at Mann's Patent Lithofracteur Works, Kororoit Creek, on Wednesday, has terminated fatally in the case of the man Hodsman, who died on Thursday morning in the Melbourne Hospital. The manager and part proprietor of the works, Frederick Mann, states that shortly after noon deceased with three other hands were engaged in making some alterations to a leaden tank in one of the houses attached to the manufactory. It is supposed that the tank had not been thoroughly cleansed, according to printed instructions issued to every *employé* and posted about the works. Through this neglect, a small portion or thin coating of nitro-glycerine, it is thought, must have remained attached to the tank. After the alterations had been completed, the three men left deceased and went to another part of the works. Hodsman then proceeded with a wooden mallet to endeavour to get the tank into proper shape. After three blows had been struck, the small portion or coating of nitro-glycerine left on the tank must have been struck, thus causing a slight explosion, which had the effect of igniting some other combustibles near at hand, and injuring deceased most severely in the lower portion of the stomach. The effect of the explosion was plainly felt in an adjoining portion of the works, and some *débris* struck the young man Brown, causing a severe gash in his right hand.

An inquest was held by Mr. Candler at the Melbourne Hospital yesterday on the body of James Hodsman, aged 50 years, who died there on the 2nd inst. from the effects of injuries received by an explosion of nitro-glycerine, at the Australian Lithofracteur works, Kororoit Creek.

William Osborne, a labourer employed at the Lithofracteur Works, said that he was working in the same place with the deceased. The deceased was bending over a lead tank and working with a wooden mallet. When he struck the corner of the tank an explosion took place. Witness was then standing about

16ft. off, and escaped uninjured. The deceased was struck by a portion of the tank, and a man alongside witness was also struck, but was not injured severely.

Frank Mann, the working manager of the works, deposed that the deceased had been employed for about two years at the works as a carpenter. On the 1st inst. witness directed him to place a leaden tank in position, and saw that he did so. The tank was used in the separation of the nitro-glycerine from the acid used in the manufacture, and it required to be placed in position for future use. The deceased had performed this piece of work several times before, and he had made the

several times before, and he had made the tank himself. There was no danger in handling the tank. The deceased had been engaged in the manufacture of nitro-glycerine, and knew the dangers connected with it. There were special rules with reference to striking things which contained or had contained nitro-glycerine. The mode of straightening the lead, of which the tank was made, should have been by pressure and not by concussion. The rules were written out, and the deceased was acquainted with them. He was a sober man, and intelligent. All the hands employed on the works were shown the rules, and had them explained. After the accident the deceased said to witness that he wondered he had been so foolish as to strike the tank.

William James Bunting, another labourer employed at the works, said he saw the deceased striking the tank with a mallet, and a few minutes afterwards heard the explosion. He went forward and found the deceased lying at the tank with his leg shattered. Deceased was then quite sensible, and said, "Why was I so foolish as to strike it?" He was conveyed to the hospital.

Joseph Wm. Hodsman, son of the deceased, gave evidence as to having heard his father say after the accident that no one was to blame but himself.

Angus Munro, resident surgeon of the hospital, said the deceased man was admitted at a quarter to 1 p.m., suffering from a lacerated wound on the anterior aspect of left knee joint, with fracture of the bones, and an extensive laceration of all the structures entering into the composition of the joint. There was also a lacerated wound in the right groin, about three inches in length, and the left thumb and palm were crushed. He was then conscious, but suffering from extreme collapse. A consultation of the honorary staff was held at half-past 2 p.m., when it was decided, owing to the man's excessively low condition, that any operative measures were inadvisable. The patient gradually sank, and he died at 1 a.m. on the following morning. The cause of death was the injuries described. The deceased said he had been accidentally blown up by an explosion of nitro-glycerine.

The jury found that the deceased died from the effects of an explosion of nitro-glycerine, and they were of the opinion that the explosion occurred accidentally, through an act of the deceased himself.