Coal Miners.

We were seven in number, and with one exception '87 in class. We started with Prof. Crosby, on his trip to Smithfield, R. I., on last Fast Day.

When we started there was no apparent difference between us and any of the others of the party; but as we returned, blind must have been the man who knew us not.

"Pawtucket, change to barge for Smithfield and way stations." Yes, willingly, but in what a pouring rain! The covered barge kept us fairly dry, and by the time we reached the Valley Spring Mine, the rain had ceased. We all got out and examined the daylight workings of the mine.

The coal, which is very soft anthracite, is heated by steam in order to have it perfectly dry to pulverize. The powder, ground very fine, is packed in barrels, and sent away to be used in foundry facings and also for the glossy stiffening to cambric. This product is also used to adulterate graphite.

An opportunity was offered to descend by the inclined shaft, and we seven stepped forward and prepared to descend. I said prepared, but if we had properly prepared ourselves with old garments, this little piece never would have been written. We simply took miners' oil lamps in our hands, and jumped into the shaft to begin the descent. We had gone but a few steps, when a faint-hearted member of the party wished to return on account of the uncertain, slippery footing. "No, no," we cried, "let us see the place out. Down we pitched, through deep, black mud, till at last we reached comparative level. Now the question was, which path? We heard nothing of the "two miners," who we were told were in the mine. We chose the path which had the track in it, and started for unknown regions.

We were obliged to bend nearly double to proceed, which we did as fast as possible, till we came to a central chamber, with cuts radiating from it. While we stopped for breath, we chanced to look back, and saw a light appearing along the path we had been travelling. Soon the owner of the same drew up, and we beheld the cheery little above-ground miner who had started us on our downward way.

He brought us the astonishing news that those who had not come down were ready to start and wanted us to return. "No, indeed," we said, "we have not got wet and dirty for nothing, we are going to see the mine, and they can wait till we get back."

We then put ourselves under the guidance of our dark friend, who informed us that he "Was as white as we were when he was clean." We hoped that we were not as dark as he was, even if we did not feel perfectly clean.

Our guide conducted us along a low, winding cut, toward the miners; he said he wanted to find them first, in order to find out from them what we could see. The cut along which we were going was barely wide enough for the eighteen inch track, and just high enough for us to crawl along. It was covered on the bottom with a thick layer of dirty, black mud. We were following our guide at a pretty fair speed when suddenly we were stopped short, hearing a deep, low rumble. We six held our breath, not knowing what was coming next. The seventh member of our party, who was an English newspaper correspondent, geologist, and scientific bummer generally, cried out, "The Lord preserve us! Say your prayers, and prepare to die." But our guide comprehended our real danger, and shouted, "Turn around and go the other way as fast as you can. They are going to blast and are rushing the car." It seemed as if we never could get turned around and started on a retreat, and when started our feet stuck so in the mud that we did not appear to gain much ground. Nearer and nearer came the miners with their thudding car. We tried to hurry, splashing through the mud. One unfortunate lost his hat, by reason of too close contact with the roof of the tunnel, and jumping to save the hat lost his lamp. On, through sloppy mud, in darkness. It seemed now a mile, where before had been a few steps. At last we reached an opening, the miners drew up their car, and we breathed again. The miners had