

The Miners' Lodging, Lockett

1862 (commission report extract) comments upon a miners' shop in the north of England:

(and there are 3 more which show how awful it was to live in one !)

“ The upper floor was for sleeping. Downstairs were the kitchen, washing, drying and eating areas. On entering the door it was seen that the lower part was one room, lighted by one of the windows, and had a great fire burning at the east end. By pacing the floor the length was ascertained to be about 18 feet, and the breadth about 15 feet. Along the one side, that next the window, was a meal table, extending the whole length of the room, and alongside of it was a form, and there were two other forms in the room. All along the other side on the wall were little cupboards, 48 in number, in four tiers above each other, six of the cupboards with the doors off, but most of the rest carefully locked with padlocks, and in which the several miners had deposited their wallets, with their provisions for five days. Throughout the room, more particularly at the end farthest from the fire, were hung, from hooks and nails in the joists, miners trousers and jackets, to be ready to be put on in case of the owners returning wet from their work. On ascending to the upper room by a ladder, it was seen to be a sleeping-room. The dimensions of the floor were of course the same as of the room below. There was no fireplace, which indeed was not wanted, but neither was there any opening into the chimney to produce circulation of air. Along one side of the room were three beds, each six feet long, by about four feet and a half wide - the three beds extending the length of the room, then there were three other beds on the other side; and at the farther end was a seventh bed, extending from the one line of beds to the other. Immediately over these seven beds, and supported on posts, were seven other beds, placed exactly in the same way. Of course the person who slept in each of the six beds next the wall of the upper tier could raise his head only a very little way, on account of the roof. Each of these 14 beds was intended for two persons, when only few men were employed at the mine, but they might be made to receive three men each; and, in case of need, a boy might lie across at their feet. There was no opening of any sort to let out the foul air. Yet from 30 to 40 persons might have to sleep there, the men perspiring from their work, and inhaling the small dust from their clothes floating in clouds. The beds were stuffed with chaff. There were blankets, but no sheets. The furniture of the lodging-shops is supplied by the masters. The beds and blankets are supplied by the miners themselves. They are taken home sometimes to be washed.

One can imagine the above, especially those who have looked inside the building, applying to Lockett too. “

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