

**An Old Boiler Sends Two Men Into Eternity.**

New Providence, Pa., Dec. 29.—An awful calamity started this community between 8 and 9 this morning. On the old Book farm [now John Hildebrand's] a quarter of a mile northwest of this village, Christian Hildebrand and Edwin Helm, both young men, were instantly killed; the barn and adjoining buildings, with contents, were utterly destroyed by fire and the live stock, to the number of between forty and fifty head, perished in the flames, in this [Lancaster] county.

This morning Hildebrand and Helm proposed to begin cutting feed. Their engine, an 11-horse power second-hand one, was rigged up on the barn bridge and Mr. Hildebrand, with Wm. Eckman, Edward Helm and an 11-year-old lad named Frank Edwards, were engaged in the work. The engine had been run up to 163 pounds of steam pressure; Helm and Hildebrand were standing near it, with the Edwards boy between them; young Eckman was in the barn feeding the machine. Suddenly without a moment's warning the boiler exploded.

Hildebrand seems to have incurred the full force of the momentum given to the broken machine. His body was hurled through the air and alighted on top of the wagon-shed, 20 feet from the ground. Helm was dashed to the earth, frightfully mangled and instantly killed. The little Edwards boy was scalded by the boiling water and had his clothes set on fire. Frightened almost to death, he started on a run to the village, his clothes aflame and himself shrieking with pain. He was met on the road by J. Calvin Helm, who put out the fire and started him home for relief.

Eckman, who had escaped serious injury, at once dragged the lifeless body of Helm from the wreck. He then gave his attention to Christian Hildebrand, whose body was seen upon the wagon-shed roof where the force of the explosion had thrown it.

Meanwhile the coals which the explosion had scattered over the premises set fire to the large barn in a dozen places. In the excitement little thought was given either to the preservation of the property or the rescue of the imprisoned live stock, and soon the barn was in flames beyond any hope of rescue. Thence the conflagration readily extended to and entirely destroyed the wagon-shed, corn crib, chicken house and other sheds, with all their contents. Among the last property were a pair of mules, two horses, five colts, eight fat steers, fifteen head of young cattle, two cows and eight hogs. Eighteen hundred bushels of corn was destroyed; all the hay, straw and grain in the barn; together with much valuable machinery. The fodder cutter and other implements were totally ruined.

The dwelling house, which stands near by the burned buildings, was on fire several times and only by great exertion of the increasing crowd of neighbors was saved from destruction. The fragments of the broken machinery were scattered all over the place, and some of the wheels of the engine were found a hundred yards distant. A very short time before the wreck Mr. Hildebrand had been in the house and spoke to his wife. Two minutes later the horrified young widow saw her husband's dead body flying through the air. The skulls of both men were fractured. Helm's neck was broken, and he was badly scalded and cut. Hildebrand's one leg was cut; he was injured internally and had many bones broken. Dr. Amos Helm made the medical examination.

"I never saw a man act so ridiculous in all my life as that man Thompson did at church yesterday. I'll declare it was a shame. He didn't seem to pay any attention whatever to the sermon, but sat there and chuckled to himself as though he'd been drinking. He was just as fidgety as he could be all through the service, and once during the prayer he snickered outright; he actually did, and as soon as the benediction was pronounced he grabbed his hat and bolted out in a hurry. I wonder what in the world could have ailed the man."

"Have'n't you heard? 'No, not a word. Do you know?' 'Yes, I think I do.' 'What in the name of goodness was it?' 'Twins—they're just a week old today and he's almost tickled to death.'

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