

## THE DEATHS FROM THE EXPLOSION AT EAST GREENWICH.

Last evening, at the Board Room of the Greenwich Workhouse, Mr. Cartlar resumed the inquiry touching the deaths of Susannah Lake and Mary Masters, who were fatally injured in the explosion at Messrs Dyer and Robson's Works, East Greenwich, on June 11th.

Col. Majendie, H.M. Chief Inspector of Explosives, and Mr. Redgrave, Inspector of Factories, were present; and Mr. Morris, barrister, watched the proceeding, on behalf of Messrs. Dyer and Robson.

Catherine Allman and Mrs. Elizabeth Millman, who were in the shed at the time of the explosion, described the circumstances in which it took place. They were engaged from 6.30 a.m. till 1.30 making fireworks, and at the latter hour an explosion suddenly took place. They could not speak positively as to the cause of the explosion, but said that the sun was shining strongly through the windows on to the composition which they were using. The explosion was not a loud one, or very forcible. All were wearing their proper clothing, which afforded them much protection.

Mr. James William Dyer, ammunition and fire-work maker, of Woolwich-road, said he could see the explosion from his office. It occurred in No. 7 shed, in which he was licensed to have 25lbs. of coloured fire composition and 50lbs. of manufactured fireworks. No more than four persons were allowed to work in the shed at one time. He visited it twice during the morning. When he heard the explosion he went down to the shed, which was alight inside, hearing another report as he went down his office stairs. The windows were broken. The four people were very steady. It had occurred to him that possibly an unseen flaw in the windows had caused a pane to act as a burning glass and so cause the explosion. The ingredients in the composition comprised chlorate of potash, nitrate of strychnine, a small proportion of charcoal and some sulphur. It would require heavy concussion to explode it. Since the occurrence he had decided, at the suggestion of Col. Majendie, to isolate the workpeople in future by partitions, and put ground glass in the windows.

By Col. Majendie: His attention was first attracted by screams, and he afterwards heard a report. The composition used was exceptionally sensitive, and was required to be so. Mrs. Millman was thoroughly skilled in the work. If there was an excess of sulphur the composition would be very dangerous. A man named Kirby weighed out the quantities; he was very careful indeed. The shed was about 12ft. by 12ft. and 8ft. high.

Col. Majendie was sworn, and said he was very familiar with these works, and visited them the same afternoon as the explosion, and twice or thrice since. All the requirements of the Act were complied with strictly in Mr. Dyer's works, and he had always been satisfied with the condition of the factory, which was a large one. The Colonel gave a description of the operations on which the women were engaged at the time of the occurrence. He took away some of the firework stars, and had made experiments with them, and found that there could be no doubt they were of an extremely sensitive and dangerous character, more, perhaps, than Mr. Dyer was aware. This sensitiveness was increased with the heat of the sun. The experiments made were with the object of ascertaining if spontaneous combustion were possible, and it was found that even if they were exposed to the sun for five hours spontaneous combustion would not take place. But having been exposed to the heat of the sun, the very slightest concussion from the mallet used was sufficient to explode the stars. Even rubbing them caused it, and he had no doubt whatever that either the mallet had been thrown down and struck the stars, or the tray