

TERRIBLE EXPLOSION.

A most deplorable and fatal accident took place at the Australian Explosives Factory, Deer Park, on Monday last, about 5 o'clock. It appears that four men were employed in the cartridge shed filling cartridges with pebble powder, which is a very powerful explosive. The powder is filled into the cartridges by hand, and they are then subjected to considerable pressure by a machine used for that purpose. Three of the men were filling and attending the machine while the fourth was at some distance making up the parcel of cartridges. The powder is brought to the shed in quantities of 25 pounds at a time. The men were just about to knock off when a terrible explosion took place blowing the shed into fragments and burying the unfortunate men in the ruins. Immediately a rescue party set to work to remove the *debris*, and two of the men, Warnock and Williams were discovered frightfully burned and mutilated, Warnock having large splinters of wood driven into his head, chest and thigh. Both men showed signs of life, and every effort was made to ease their sufferings. In the meantime the bodies of the other two men, Hearst and Stewart were found horribly torn and mangled, in each the abdomen was completely burst open, and portions of the limbs torn off, pieces being found at some distance from the bodies. The two sufferers were removed to the hospital, where Warnock has since expired. Two other men named John Benson and John Magrath, who were at some distance from the explosion received injuries but not of a serious character, and were attended to by Dr. McCarthy, who was telephoned for and arrived with all speed. The men who were killed are John Hearst, aged 23, who leaves a wife and two children, Alex. Stewart, married, with one child, Galvin Warnock, aged 19, single. The man who is still in the hospital seriously injured is Richard Williams, aged 26, and unmarried. The cause of the explosion is surmised to have been the presence of some grit or small stone in the powder, which under the pressure of the machine had caused friction, and a spark would be generated which ignited the powder. As soon as the explosion was heard, and the cloud of smoke seen great excitement arose amongst those who had relatives or friends at work in the factory, and while to some the news of the safety of their

to some the news of the safety of their friends came as a great relief, the shock to those bereaved was something dreadful, too much to be described. The Shire Council was sitting at the time, and the members were shortly on the spot with offered aid, but all that could be done was but little, as the other employes were there in force. The sad event has cast a gloom over the entire district.