



*The Mort's Dock locomotive in use at the lower level of
Hartley Vale oilworks. G.H. Eardley colln.*

THE LOCOMOTIVES OPERATING THE HARTLEY VALE METRE GAUGE RAILWAY.

It would be merest speculation on our part to claim any degree of accuracy concerning the identity of the three steam locomotives purported to have been in operation on the metre gauge railways at Hartley Vale. The difficulty in their identification arises from a lack of access to company records showing such details. In the company's annual reports occasional reference is made to the "FLAT" locomotive, and also the "HILL-TOP" locomotive, needing repair, from which statement it may be gathered that there were two locomotives in the company's service. However, Mr. O'Burnaby Bolton, a most reliable railway historian, stated that during a visit made to Hartley Vale about 1907 he saw and photographed a Dubs built locomotive in steam on the "HILL-TOP" section and from the vantage point at the main haulage way bank-head he observed two other small locomotives puffing away in the valley far below.

Local inquiries at Hartley Vale village elicited that three locomotives were formerly in use, their makers being Dubs, Armstrong, and Fowler, of which claims we can be sure of the Dubs and doubtful of the Fowler, whilst the Armstrong has escaped identification. However, another record which, like the former record, may or may not be correct, lists an 0-4-0 saddle-tank engine by the Sydney firm of Mort and Company, a 2-4-0 tank-engine by Dubs of Glasgow, and a 2-4-0 saddle-tank engine by John Fowler and Company of Leeds. The second engine, long shorn of its dis-

tinctive diamond shaped maker's plates affixed to the outer sides of the side-tanks, is reputed to have carried Dubs work's number 1442 of 1881.

This latter locomotive, when seen on the "HILL-TOP" section of the tramway, was of a low set sturdy design and fitted with a long stove-pipe chimney. The dome-shade was straight-sided and its dished top was surmounted by a pair of George Salter's spring-balanced safety-valves. The enclosed cab had its front-plate, and full length back-plate pierced by two circular windows, whilst the side-plates were of the almost circular cut-a-way type. The coal bunker, of small dimensions, was contained within the cab and placed against, and rivetted to, the back-plate. The front and rear buffer plates were greatly extended in their depth, the spring buffers being placed lower and closer together than what would be regarded as the standard position for such fitments, an arrangement made to match the wagon sole-bars placed between the wheels and extended beyond the head-stocks of each vehicle to act as dumb-buffer heads. The outside cylinders each had a diameter of 9 inches and a stroke of 15 inches, the overhead steam-chests having their slide-valves actuated by inside Stephenson's link-motion per medium of the two separate divisions of a rocking shaft. A lever type reversing gear was provided. The leading wheels had a diameter of 18 inches and the coupled wheels measured 27 inches. Unfortunately other major dimensional details are not available.